Manor owner charged; 2 QC officials fired

STORY IN METRO, PAGE A19

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

TUESDAY, AUGUST 21, 2001 ★★ 38 PAGES 3 SECTIONS VOL.16 NO. 254 P15

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NAMAMAYANI ANG DIWA NI NINOY!

Sorry, People Power not for export–FVR

BY BLANCHE S. RIVERA AND JULIET L. JAVELLANA

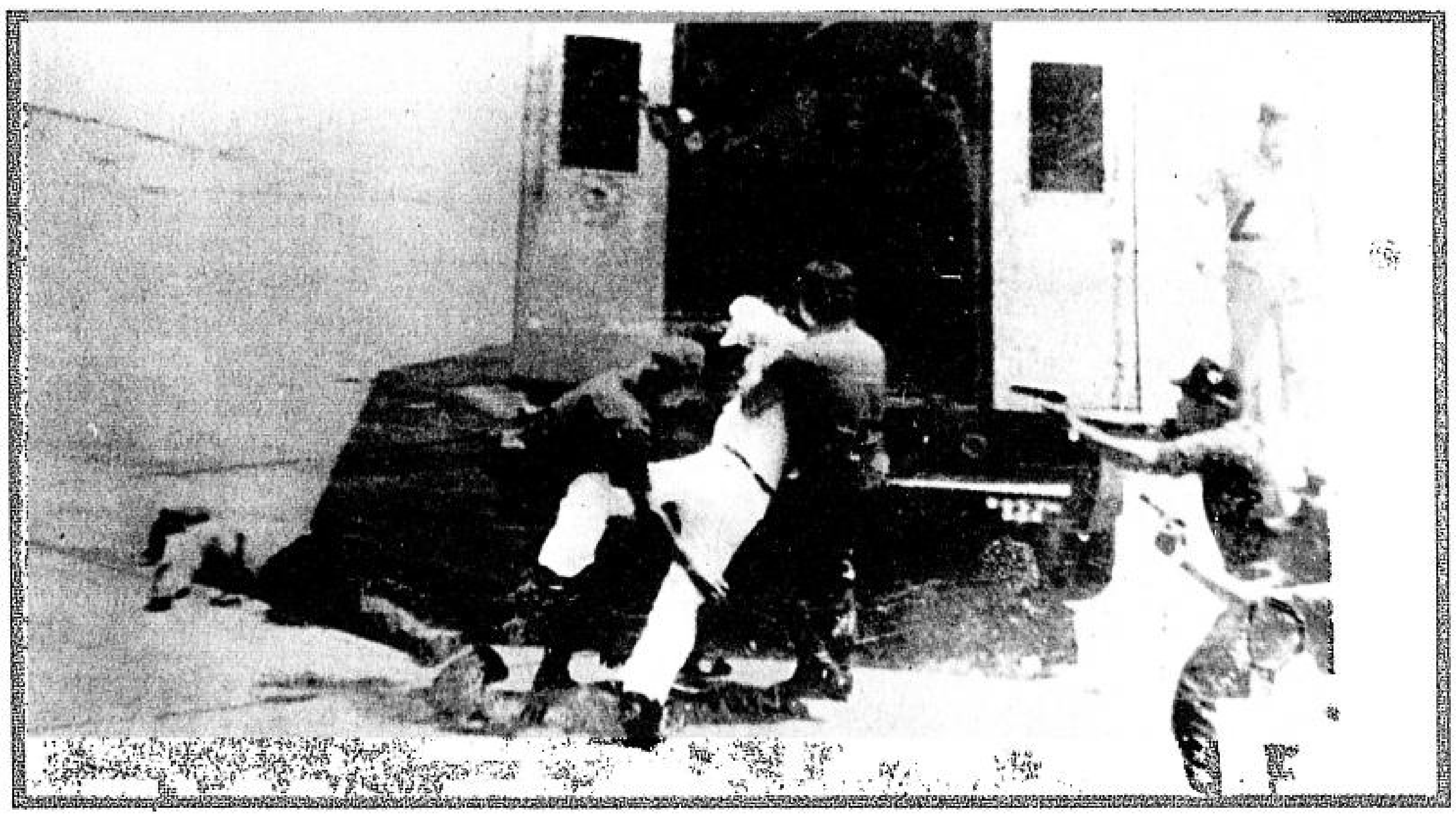
PEOPLE Power I and II are not for export, according to former President Fidel Ramos.

Speaking before a gathering of Asian editors and publishers at yesterday's farewell conference for Thomas Bernd Stehling, Asian media project director of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Ramos warned other Asian countries not to emulate the popular uprisings that ousted two notorious Philippine presidents.

He said that people power was "applicable only to the Philippines," and that the "Philippine style of democracy" allowed for the citizenry to usher in a new administration with street marches.

At the same gathering held at the Mandarin Oriental hotel in Makati City, President Macapagal-Arroyo announced that the Philip-

SORRY/ A16



AUGUST 21, 1983

The shots that were heard around the world at the scene that has been seared into the collective memory of the Filipino. Eighty-two seconds after he stepped out of the plane that brought him home from his three-year exile in the US, former Sen. Benigno S. Aquino was shot dead on the tarmac of the Manila International Airport despite close to 2,000 soldiers deployed by the Marcos government ostensibly to secure him. After he fell, Aquino, the Man in White, was dragged into a van; (at left) his alleged assassin Rolando Galman, according to the Marcos military, lay dead with his secrets. The Aquino murder remains unsolved. But his killing sparked protest rallies daily, culminating in the People Revolt at Edsa and the downfall of the Marcos dictatorship in 1986.

Senate blinks, frees Ador

RP apologizes to China: It was chance encounter

BY DONA PAZZIBUGAN

A CHANCE encounter with Moro kidnappers, not a rescue operation by the military.

This was how Vice President and Foreign Secretary Teofisto Guingona explained to Chinese Ambassador Wang Chungui the circumstances surrounding the deaths of two Chinese kidnap victims in Central Mindanao.

Wang called on Guingona yesterday to express the Chinese Embassy's "shock and pain" over the deaths as well as to demand an explanation from the Philippine government.

For his part, Guingona expressed regret over the killing of Xue Xin and Zhang Zhongqiang who were shot by Moro kidnappers when the two tried to escape during the gun battle in Sultan Kudarat.

Bad weather yesterday prevented the airlifting of their bodies to Manila yesterday.

The slain hostages were among four Chinese engineers kidnapped recently by Moro bandits. The four Chinese were working at a P2.7-billion irrigation project in North Cotabato.

The military earlier erroneously identified the body of Zhang Zhongqiang as that of his brother, Zhang Zhongyi.

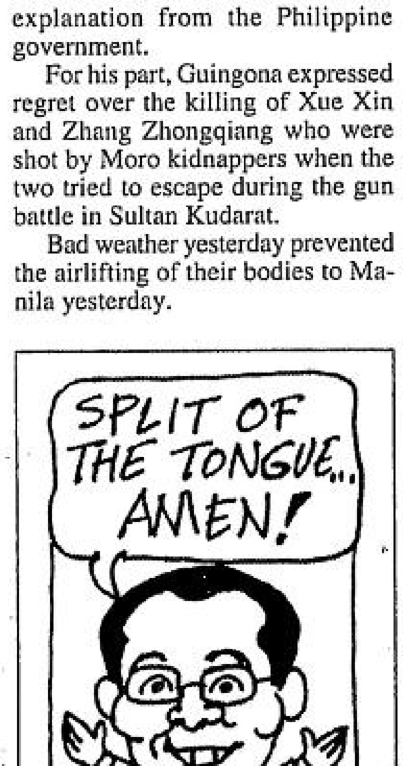
Wang Shengli suffered superficial gunshot wounds but managed to escape at the height of the firefight. He is undergoing a debriefing by the military.

Military officials said seven kidnappers were also killed in two firefights in Bunawan, a hinterland village of Columbio town.

But the rest of the Moro bandits were able to escape with two hostages—Zhang Zhongyi and Chinese-Filipino trader Edwin Lim.

Victoriano Lecaros, spokesperson of the Department of Foreign Affairs, said Guingona explained

RP/ A14


SPLIT OF THE TONGUE... AMEN!

Bro. Mike explains 'veep' slip

BY JULIET L. JAVELLANA

PANGA, ay, pangu, ay, pangalawang, ay, pangulo pala...

In front of President Macapagal-Arroyo and his

BRO. MIKE/ A14

Botolan folk all set to evacuate

BY TONETTE OREJAS AND CESAR VILLA
PDI Central Luzon Desk

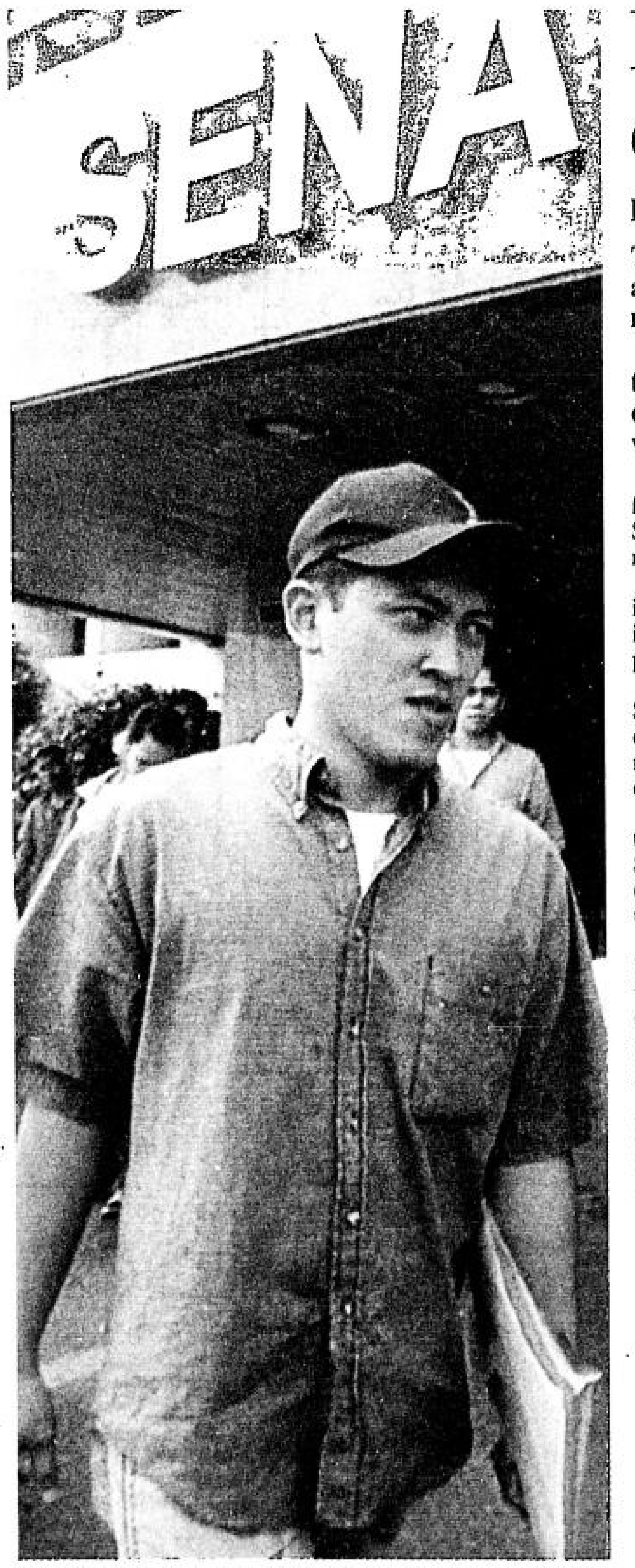
IBA, Zambales—The water level in Mt. Pinatubo's crater-lake rose by 2.2 meters during the last three weeks and was just 4.1 meters below the spilling level, geologist Kelvin Rodolfo said yesterday.

Most residents in Botolan's 14 villages that are threatened by lahar are now ready to evacuate immediately once water from Pinatubo's crater-lake is released.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development estimates that there are around 2,000 families living in the lahar-threatened areas.

The Zambales Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council (PDCC) reported that 95 percent of the families in the barangays of Macolcol, Yamot, Burgos, Maguisguis, Poonbato, San Juan, Paudpod, Carael, Batonlapoc, Paco, San Miguel, Bangan, Capayawan and Porac have packed their belongings

BOTOLAN/ A16



LEAVING the Senate, Ador Mawanay is reportedly on his way to visit Cardinal Sin. JESS YUSON

But Drilon maintains detention was correct

BY ARMAND N. NOCUM

THE SENATE yesterday backtracked and ordered the release of alleged ex-civilian agent Angelo "Ador" Mawanay into the custody of military intelligence chief Col. Victor Corpus.

But despite the order, Senate President Franklin Drilon maintained that the chamber was correct to detain Mawanay on the basis of his allegation Friday that Sen. Loren Legarda bought P8.9 million worth of smuggled cellular phones from him in 1998.

Lawyer Leonard de Vera of the Equal Justice for All Movement (E-Just) pointed out that the Senate's release order constituted a "complete retreat."

"(The senators) have realized the mistake arising from their arbitrary and emotional reaction in jailing Ador," De Vera told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

Drilon and Sen. Robert Barbers, chair of the Senate committee on public order and illegal drugs, announced at a press briefing that both majority and minority senators had agreed in a caucus to put Mawanay in Corpus' custody.

Told that Mawanay was already in the "protective custody" of the Corpus-led Intelligence Services of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp), Drilon admitted that he did not know this.

He said the matter would be "an arrangement between (Mawanay) and the Isafp, but officially, we will place him under the custody of Colonel Corpus so that it is Colonel Corpus who will now answer to the Senate in case Ador is not produced."

Drilon said that under pain of being declared in contempt, Corpus should guarantee Mawanay's presence at the Senate hearings investigating the Isafp chief's allegations that Sen. Panfilo Lacson was engaged in drug trafficking, money laundering and other crimes.

De Vera said the senators were "reacting to the backlash in public opinion."

Drilon, however, said the Senate blue ribbon, public order and national defense committees were within their rights to detain Mawanay.

He cited Section 18 of the Senate rules saying that a person who "testifies falsely and evasively" can be cited for contempt.

"The action of the committees is governed by the rules . . . The action (to detain Mawanay) is with basis," he said.

Drilon reiterated the position earlier aired by Senators Legarda and Aquilino Pimentel that the Senate "took Mawanay into custody in order to

SENATE/ A14

Nene blames propagandists, as John O. admits folly

BY CHRISTINE O. AVENDAÑO

SENATORS struggled yesterday with the fallout from last week's controversial joint hearing. Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. blamed "propagandists" for "distorting" what happened, but new majority member Sen. John Osmeña said the Senate "deserved the scorn" it got over the way it handled military intelligence chief Col. Victor Corpus and his chief witness Angelo "Ador" Mawanay.

Pimentel assailed Corpus for "cavalierly discharging" his duty, and warned that Corpus' blunders might see "more destabilizing events in the days to come unless he is properly put in place."

In a statement, Osmeña said the Senate had "foolishly (taken) the bait" of Corpus. "We are now bullies in the public eye and downcast. We deserve it. We should release Ador, tell him to go to the Ombudsman and do our job, the money laundering bill to begin with."

Mawanay was released yesterday. ***(See related story.)***

Senate Majority Leader Loren Legarda delivered a short privilege speech where she both denied Mawanay's allegation that she

NENE/ A14

Lim says Kim Wong a 'drug lord'

Ex-DILG chief also claims Wong behind murder of Sino trader

BY CHRISTINE HERRERA

FORMER Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim yesterday tagged Kim Wong as both a "drug lord" and the mastermind of the "cold-blooded murder" of a Chinese businessman hired as an interpreter by the Philippine National Police under then chief Panfilo Lacson in May 2000.

"Kim Wong is a drug lord masquerading as a legitimate businessman," Lim declared at the Kapihan sa Manila Hotel, corroborating allegations leveled by military intelligence chief Victor Corpus.

Lawyer Frank Chavez, Wong's counsel, denied that his client was a drug lord. He said Lim was doing a "demolition job" on Wong because the businessman supported the winning mayoralty bid of Lim rival Lito Atienza.

Lim, however, said he was not "sour graping," and claimed that he simply wanted to warn the public against Wong's alleged "nefarious activities," particularly in the area of drug trading.

Wong, a Chinese-Filipino restaurant owner and garments manu-

LIM/ A15

WALANG EBIDENSIYA!

Sabaya still in Basilan says military

BY CARLITO PABLO

ABU SAYYAF spokesperson Abu Sabaya is still in Basilan, the military yesterday insisted.

Military spokesperson Brig. Gen. Edilberto Adan said Basilan Gov. Wahab Akbar might have been fed the wrong information that Sabaya has already slipped out of the island and escaped to Zamboanga del Sur.

"It (escape) is not yet confirmed," Adan told defense reporters. "We still believe Sabaya is still in Basilan… the information (of Akbar) is not reliable."

Citing his own sources, Akbar had claimed that Sabaya has fled to Zamboanga del Sur and is now under the protection of Abdusalam Kiddie, leader of a "lost command" of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

Kiddie was previously known for his involvement in the September 1998 abduction of Italian priest Luciano Benedetti.

Adan, however, noted that 1st Infantry Division commander Brig. Gen. Glicerio Sua has been directed to verify Akbar's information and personally check it with the governor himself.

NO EVIDENCE FROM OMBUDSMAN

Sandigan drops tax case

BY DONNA S. CUETO

THE SANDIGANBAYAN yesterday dismissed 62 graft cases filed against a former finance undersecretary and Petron Corp. officials, among others, in connection with the P690-million tax credit certificate scam.

In dismissing the graft cases, the anti-graft court's 4th division chair Narciso Nario said he was doing so to "jolt" the Ombudsman's office from its stupor.

The Ombudsman's office filed the cases in March last year but the court said it has been waiting for the past one year and four months for it to submit its reinvestigation of the cases.

Up to this time, the court said the Ombudsman has not even said if there was sufficient cause to indict the respondents.

The court said it could not wait any longer, saying a further delay would violate the rights of the accused to a speedy disposition of the cases against them.

"The defense kept on moving for the dismissal of the cases for the failure of the prosecution to prosecute these cases," Nario said.

But he said he was giving the Ombudsman until this week to submit its recommendation based on the prosecution's reinvestigation.

If the evidence is sufficient to indict, he would then set 10 "continuous hearings."

Resolution

The court had issued a resolution on April 28, 2000 for the Ombudsman to reinvestigate the cases against former finance undersecretary Antonio Belicena and 27 others, including Petron Corp. president Monico Jacob, upon the motion of the respondents.

Originally, the prosecution was given only 60 days to finish its reinvestigation. But the state prosecutor kept asking for, and was repeatedly granted, more time to submit his recommendation.

Prosecutor Orlando Ines said he had already submitted his recommendation to the Office of the Special Prosecutor but it has not been acted on.

In a motion dated Aug. 16, Ines requested the cancellation of the arraignment of the accused set for yesterday because of the failure to approve his recommendation on the case.

Aside from Belicena and Jacob, there are at least 26 more respondents in the graft cases.

They are Uldarico Andutan Jr., executive director of the DOF one-stop-shop that issued the tax credit certificates; and Celso Legarda, Apolinario Reyes, Rafael Dia Jr. and Reynaldo Campos, all Petron officials.

The Ombudsman earlier identified at least 18 garment firms as having allegedly transferred 246 tax credit certificates with a total value of P614.6 million in favor of Petron.

The other respondents are owners of businesses which had bought or sold the TCCs. They are Regina Gonzales, Carlos Go Chung, Tan Dy Lee, Angel Chua, Guiller Tumangon, Esteban Castillo, Rosenda Ong, Antonio Roman, Marialen Corpuz, Evelita Tizon, Purita Napenas, Melrose Tordesillas, Marife Cabadin, Gemma Abara, Asuncion Magdaet, Ramon Santos, Danny Ty, Rodrigo Rayo Garcia, Tam Yek Kiat Chua, Reynaldo Ong Tan, and Tan Cho Chiang.

Duty drawbacks

The graft cases stem from the alleged abuse of tax credits and duty drawbacks, which are refund payments made by the government on duties and taxes paid by export enterprises.

Under the country's tax laws, certain export companies are allowed to obtain tax credits for duties that they pay on imported materials used for the manufacture of products for export. The companies are allowed to sell the TCCs to other companies.

The Ombudsman said that the respondents had issued the TCCs illegally from 1993 to 1997.

The respondents, however, claim that the TCC issuance was valid, and had been done before.

Megawati here today

BY JULIET L. JAVELLANA

MANILA will roll out the red carpet for newly installed Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri, who is arriving today for the first leg of her nine-nation swing in Asia.

President Macapagal-Arroyo, her spokesperson said, is looking forward to holding a long talk with the Indonesian leader who shared many similarities with her.

"She's honored that the Philippines was chosen as Madam Sukarnoputri's first stop in her nine-nation Asean trip," presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao said in a briefing.

Ms Macapagal and Megawati are daughters of former presidents and were installed to power through popular uprisings that led to the downfall of their predecessors. Both are 54 years old and have three children each.

Ms Macapagal had said that their fathers were close friends.

"Since our fathers are like brothers, we should be like sisters," Tiglao quoted the President as saying.

A five-point agenda is on the table for Megawati's first visit to Manila as Indonesian president.

She is not a new visitor since she had been to Manila twice and even stayed in Malacañang in one of her visits.

Enhancing bilateral ties between the two countries is on top of the agenda for the two women leaders during the two hours that Megawati would be in Malacañang.

She is expected to arrive at the Villamor Airbase at 2:10 p.m. and in Malacañang at 3:30 p.m. where she would be given full military honors at the Kalayaan Grounds. Megawati's spouse Taufiq Kiemas is arriving with her party.

She is expected to return at 8 p.m. for the state dinner. Megawati departs for Hanoi on Wednesday morning.

Tiglao said the President would discuss the expansion of cultural and social ties between the two countries as well as boosting agriculture, trade and fisheries.

He said they would also discuss how Manila and Kuala Lumpur could revive their participation in the Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East Asian Growth Area. He noted that the BIMP-EAGA lost steam during the 1997 Asian financial crisis.

Warning out for fake bills

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas yesterday warned that fake P500 and P1,000 bills could be circulating in the system after authorities nabbed a counterfeiter whom they suspect to be part of a larger syndicate.

The central bank refused to identify the counterfeiter, who was arrested in Quezon City last week, for fear that it may tip off the syndicate whose mastermind the authorities still have to apprehend.

Central bank agents and the police were tipped off after a stolen car found by the Philippine National Police yielded several fake P500 and P1,000 notes.

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$338 D Tuesday Shenzhen 1N; Foshan 2N; Zhuhai 1N + Guangzhou & Nanhai tour
$449 6D Thursday Shenzhen 1N; Guangzhou (air RT); Beijing 3N + Guangzhou & Foshan tours; Hongkong 1N
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Solons to get P15-M 'pork' Monday

By R. Nazareno

CONGRESSMEN will begin receiving P15 million each starting Monday representing the second tranche of their pork barrel funds for 2001 amounting to P3.1 billion.

Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin gave this assurance to the legislators yesterday during the maiden hearing of the House committee on appropriations, which is chaired by Rep. Rolando Andaya Jr. (Lakas, Camarines Sur).

The money will come from this year's P629-billion national budget and is part of the Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF) allotted to each of the 208 districts represented in the House.

The PDAF is earmarked to fund poverty alleviation projects of the national government.

Boncodin's promise to the lawmakers came after several of them questioned why the PDAF had not been released.

Aside from the PDAF, each district has another P35 million in public works funds coming, to be administered by the Department of Public Works and Highways.

Yesterday's hearing also signaled the start of deliberations for the proposed P780.8-billion national budget for 2002.

Concerns over the country's debts were also raised, with minority floor leader Carlos Padilla disclosing that next year's allocation for debt payments would likely reach P360 billion, since there is an off-budget item of P155 billion for payment of principal.

This is on top of the P204.7 billion allotted for interest payments, which has already been factored into the P780.8-billion budget.

Rep. Herminio Teves (Lakas, Negros Oriental) pointed out that the government's debts have reached P1.8 trillion because of the national government's "heavy dependence on borrowings to finance the budget."

"We are burning our economic candle on both ends and unless we undertake immediate remedial measures, we will soon end up suffering the (same) consequences (as) Argentina," Teves said.

Argentina recently suffered economic collapse after it overextended itself and failed to repay its foreign loans.

According to Teves, the Macapagal administration will again resort to borrowing to finance the next budget.

A total of P267.4 billion will be sourced from foreign and domestic lenders, while P140 billion will come from foreign financial institutions, including the Official Development Assistance (ODA) grants, to partially fund next year's budget, it was learned.

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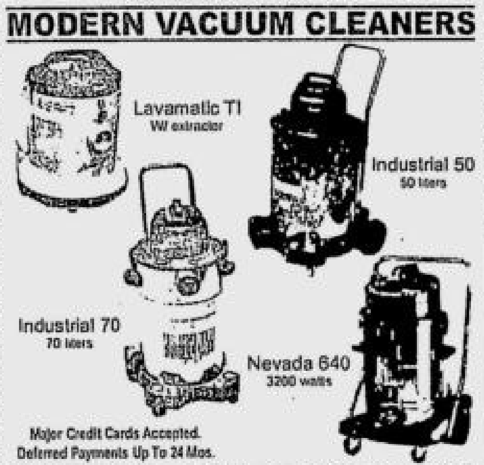

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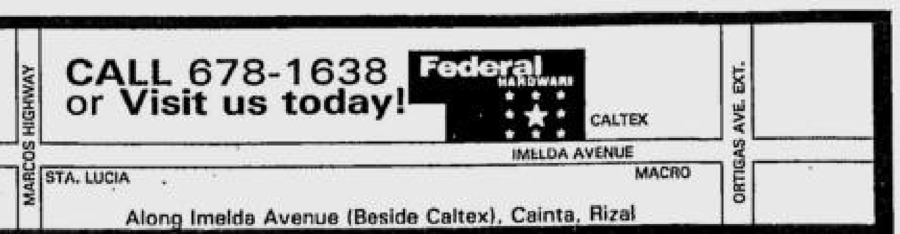

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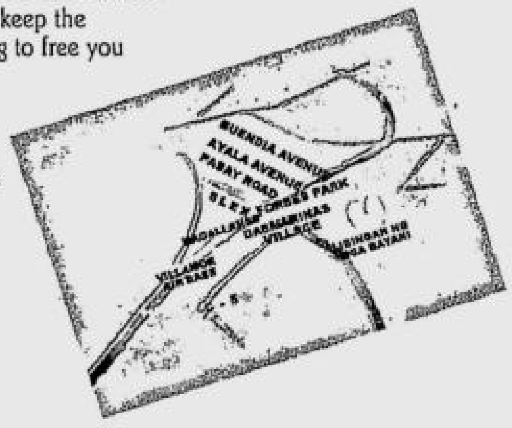

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MILITANTS IN CONGRESS

'Ka Bel' puts his best shoe forward

By Volt Contreras and Andrea T. Echavez

MILITANT labor activist Crispin Beltran wore his "best" shoes—a leather pair whose soles were wearing thin and were in need of gluing.

Leftist leader Satur Ocampo arrived in a "borrowed" car. Militant feminist Liza Maza felt nervous, like "it was my first day in school."

The three nominees of party-list group Bayan Muna finally entered the halls of Congress yesterday as members of the very same institution they used to storm and barricade in protest in years past.

Yesterday, at least, the three put their fiery tongues on hold as they began to learn the ABCs of House procedures, indeed like pupils listening attentively to House secretary general Roberto Nazareno give a brief 2 p.m. orientation.

At one point, naively, Beltran asked Nazareno if he had to provide his own nameplate for his desk in the session hall. "No, we will take care of that," Nazareno replied.

"We will have to observe (goings-on) first," Ocampo told the INQUIRER. "This is unfamiliar territory to us and so we will have to play it by ear."

He asserted, however, that Bayan Muna would remain "independent" and will not formally align itself with either the majority or minority blocs. The group will take positions "issue by issue," he said.

First sectoral reps

The new representatives became the first from the party-list ranks to be formally inducted into the 12th Congress, after a Supreme Court-ordered review of the qualifications of the groups that had joined the party-list polls.

The three were sworn into office by Speaker Jose de Venecia at 4:30 p.m. in open session, as the other congressmen stood and applauded.

As De Venecia was congratulating the three, some 50 Bayan Muna supporters in the gallery had to be reprimanded by security personnel for shouting out their slogans—in violation of session hall decorum.

Ocampo said Bayan Muna would avail of whatever discretionary funds lawmakers are entitled to—including pork barrel—to finance projects for the sectors under its wing, like the urban poor, peasants, fishermen, laborers and others.

This after the INQUIRER asked him how a militant leader like himself, who had openly criticized the pork barrel system as a source of corruption, could reconcile his stand with the fact that he is now entitled to the largesse.

"We must be realistic for now. We know we cannot convince the majority (to scrap the pork barrel). We just have to be transparent in spending the funds," he said.

Legislative agenda

Beltran said Bayan Muna will file its first House bill today calling for a P125 across-the-board wage increase in the private sector. The group is also set to file another bill asking for a P3,000 monthly raise for government employees.

For Beltran, his first day in office was something he probably never dreamed could happen.

He had wanted to be a sailor. At the age of 19, he left Albay for Manila and took on menial jobs—janitor, messenger, taxi and truck driver—to support his marine engineering course.

Circumstances, however, forced him to quit his studies in order to work full-time as a taxi driver to support his family.

Forty-nine years later, the cabbie-turned-union leader has found himself in Congress.

"Relieved" was how Ka Bel, as he is known in the labor movement and how he said he wants to be known in the House, described his first day in office.

"Finally, we will be able to start working on long-delayed bills," the 68-year-old said.

"We will obey the rules of Congress, but our conduct will not be limited by it. To dispel all fears that we will be eaten up by the system, we vow to maintain close and unbreakable linkages with the parliamentarians of the streets, and continuously dialogue with members of the basic sectors," Beltran said.

He said nothing much would change in his routine. "Only this time, I will be preparing to go to Congress instead of a rally or a mass meeting. It is a decidedly radical change for me," he quipped.

As Bayan Muna files its wage bill today, members of militant organizations like KMU, Wage Increase Solidarity, the Koalisyon ng Progresibo at Makabayang Manggagawa, Courage and the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) will form a human chain to signify the urgency of its passage.

The chain will stretch from the Litex-Manggahan market on Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City, to the Batasan complex, a distance of about one kilometer. The groups will assemble at 1 p.m.

Commissioner protests Comelec proclamation

By G. Lacuarta

MORE than a month after the winning senators have been proclaimed and officially seated, a Comelec commissioner is protesting that Sen. Ralph Recto should have been in 13th position after Sen. Gregorio Honasan, and not the other way around, in the final tally of the May 14 senatorial vote.

Commissioner Rufino Javier has questioned the final senatorial tally, particularly the ranking of Recto and Honasan, saying the figures for the final votes of the two senators had not been stated accurately.

The 12th and 13th placing is crucial as the former will serve for a term of six years while the latter will only complete the unfinished term of three years of Vice President and former Sen. Teofisto Guingona.

Javier issued a dissenting opinion on Resolution 01-006 of the National Board of Canvassers declaring Recto as 12th placer with 10,498,940 votes.

The same resolution, which the opposition Puwersa ng Masa has questioned for having been approved by a minority in the en banc led by Chair Alfredo Benipayo, placed Honasan, a PnM stalwart, in 13th position with 10,454,130 votes.

In his five-page dissenting opinion, Javier claimed that the Comelec's election records and statistics department had a different tally in which Honasan was in 12th position with 10,441,706 votes, ahead of Recto with 10,383,808 votes.

Javier said the report had been shown to him by the director of the records and statistics department, Ester Villaflor Roxas, on July 20, the same day the questioned resolution was passed.

He said the report showed the votes obtained by the senatorial candidates in Sultan Naga Dimaporo, Lanao del Norte and Maguindanao, minus the excess votes cast over the number of registered voters in these places.

Unfortunately, the resolution was adopted without regard to this fact, Javier said.

Sought for comment, Benipayo merely brushed aside Javier's allegations.

The Comelec chair insisted that the July 20 resolution on the Senate tally was based on the final report of the tabulation committee.

"That was the last (tally report)," Benipayo said.

Javier questioned why Benipayo and Commissioners Rex Borra and Florentino Tuason had signed the resolution on the final tally even if it still included the 30,000 votes from Zamboanga del Norte, allegedly padded in Recto's favor, which the NBOC had ordered deducted as early as May.

"For mysterious reasons, I learned that this (order to deduct) was not carried out," Javier said.

Javier also opposed the dismissal of Rodriguez's petitions questioning statistical improbabilities in the results of the May 14 senatorial elections in some towns in Mindanao.

The resolution was passed by a vote of 3-2, with Javier and Commissioner Luz Tancangco dissenting. Two other commissioners, Mehol Sandain and Ralph Lantion, were absent during the voting.

Earlier, Sadain protested the promulgation of the resolution, claiming he was not even notified of the voting.

Rufus Rodriguez, lawyer for Sen. Loi Ejercito of the PnM, has filed a motion asking the en banc to recall the resolution as it was not approved by the majority of the en banc.

Javier supported Rodriguez's position, saying NBOC resolution 01-006 "did not get the required absolute majority of all our members. Therefore it is invalid."

Benipayo said the en banc has not taken up Rodriguez's motion.

"We haven't met en banc for some time, and often we don't have a quorum," he said

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MUSLIM FOUNDATION

Bid to withdraw Erap funds foiled

BY MICHAEL UBAC

THE OMBUDSMAN yesterday reported that an attempt to withdraw the P211 million funds of the controversial Erap Muslim Youth Foundation from the Equitable-PCI Bank branch in Ortigas Avenue had been foiled.

"I was informed that the bank did not allow the transaction. So I believe the money is still there," Ombudsman Aniano Desierto said.

Desierto said an unnamed individual had attempted to withdraw the entire amount, which is believed to have come from illegal gambling bribes and forms part of the allegedly ill-gotten loot of jailed ex-President Joseph Estrada.

The attempted withdrawal was made just days after Desierto filed a motion to freeze the funds with the Sandiganbayan anti-graft court trying the plunder case against Estrada.

Desierto, the lead prosecutor in the plunder case, has moved for the garnishment of the funds to ensure that they remain intact once the court rules that they are ill-gotten and thus should be forfeited in favor of the state.

Freeze

The Ombudsman said a bank official had tipped him about the attempt to withdraw the funds at about 11:30 a.m. yesterday.

Desierto immediately ordered Special Prosecutor Leonardo Tamayo to ask the Sandiganbayan to immediately "freeze" the account.

Tamayo also furnished the bank with a copy of the motion for attachment/garnishment of the foundation's funds and of the P11 million deposits in five Equitable-PCI branches of Yolanda Ricaforte, the alleged Estrada-appointed of the *jueteng* bribes.

Desierto has asked the bank to reveal the identity of the person who went to the bank yesterday.

He said he was also awaiting the court's action on the motion to freeze.

No freeze

Desierto said he expected the court to immediately issue a freeze order on the questioned bank accounts to prevent any attempts to withdraw the funds.

"I expect the court to rule on it immediately. Maybe before 4:30 today," he said.

But as of press time yesterday, the court had yet to issue a freeze order.

On Wednesday, the Ombudsman, justice department had jointly decided to go after the Erap Muslim Youth Foundation funds and bank deposits in Ricaforte's name.

The government believes that the funds and bank deposits came from *jueteng* bribes, as former Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson had testified.

Desierto said the government would also go after the so-called "presidential mansions" and other properties of Estrada.

"In the event the deposed President is found guilty of the plunder charge against him, now being heard at the Sandiganbayan, the said properties shall be forfeited to the state," Desierto said.

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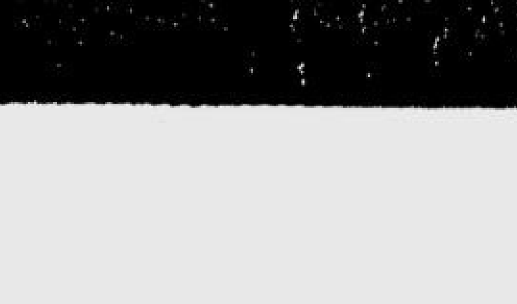

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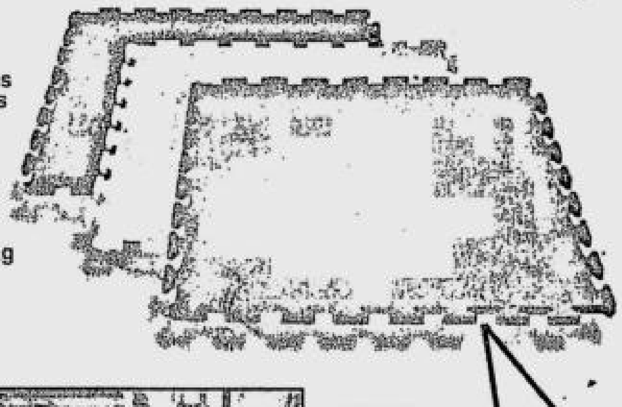

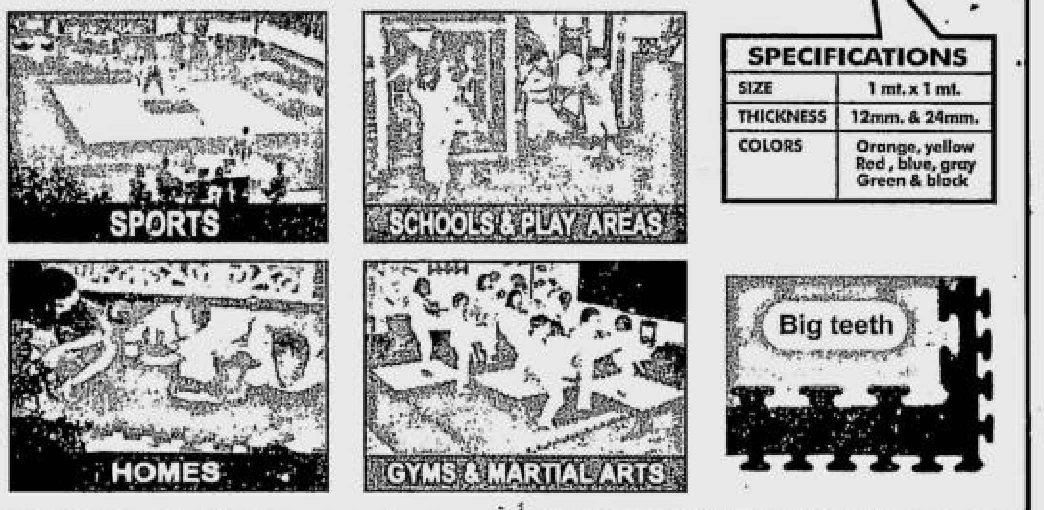

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OPINION

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Fatal indifference

EDITORIALS

WE never learn. One would think that after the Ozone Disco fire in 1996 that killed 162, after the Settlement House fire in Paco in 1998 that snuffed out the lives of 28 people, including 23 children, and after the Lung Center fire, also in 1998, that killed 25 patients, government officials would strictly enforce building safety laws and ordinances.

The fire that struck the Quezon City Manor Hotel last Saturday, killing 72 people, showed that government officials and owners of buildings used by the public have not learned their lessons. After brief, whirlwind moves to show that something was being done about the problem of potential firetraps, the government officials and owners of buildings continued to go on in their usual, devil-may-care way, unperturbed by the possibility that their negligence and apathy could kill scores of people in the future. Which was what actually happened last Saturday.

Many of the findings in the three big, fatal fires are similar:

- Ozone and Manor lacked alarm systems, emergency lights and sprinkler systems.
- They lacked or had inadequate portable fire extinguishers. The fire extinguishers at the disco were defective.
- Ozone did not have fire exits. Manor had, but they were either obstructed or inadequate.

In addition, Ozone's original fire exit was blocked by a new building built next door. And the main door, the only exit, swung one way, opening only toward the interior, preventing a quick exit to the street outside. Many of the fire victims were found piled up at the door.

The specific findings of inspectors of the Bureau of Fire Protection in the case of the Manor Hotel were that two of the hotel's fire exits were locked, the building had no alarm system, no emergency lights and no sprinkler system. They also found several pieces of wood obstructing the fire exits on each floor.

An inspection made two months ago showed that the hotel was continuing to violate certain safety regulations. Quezon City Fire Marshal Ricardo Lemence said the owners were given 30 days to comply but he did not say whether they took the necessary measures. Why was the hotel not closed last month, after the 30-day compliance period ran out?

There's more to this tale of negligence, laxity and indifference that should have the average citizen gritting his teeth in anger and frustration: local officials said the Manor Hotel building was apparently not designed as a hotel. It had no windows in the rear. If this was so, why was it allowed to operate as a hotel without the owners first making the necessary changes and renovation?

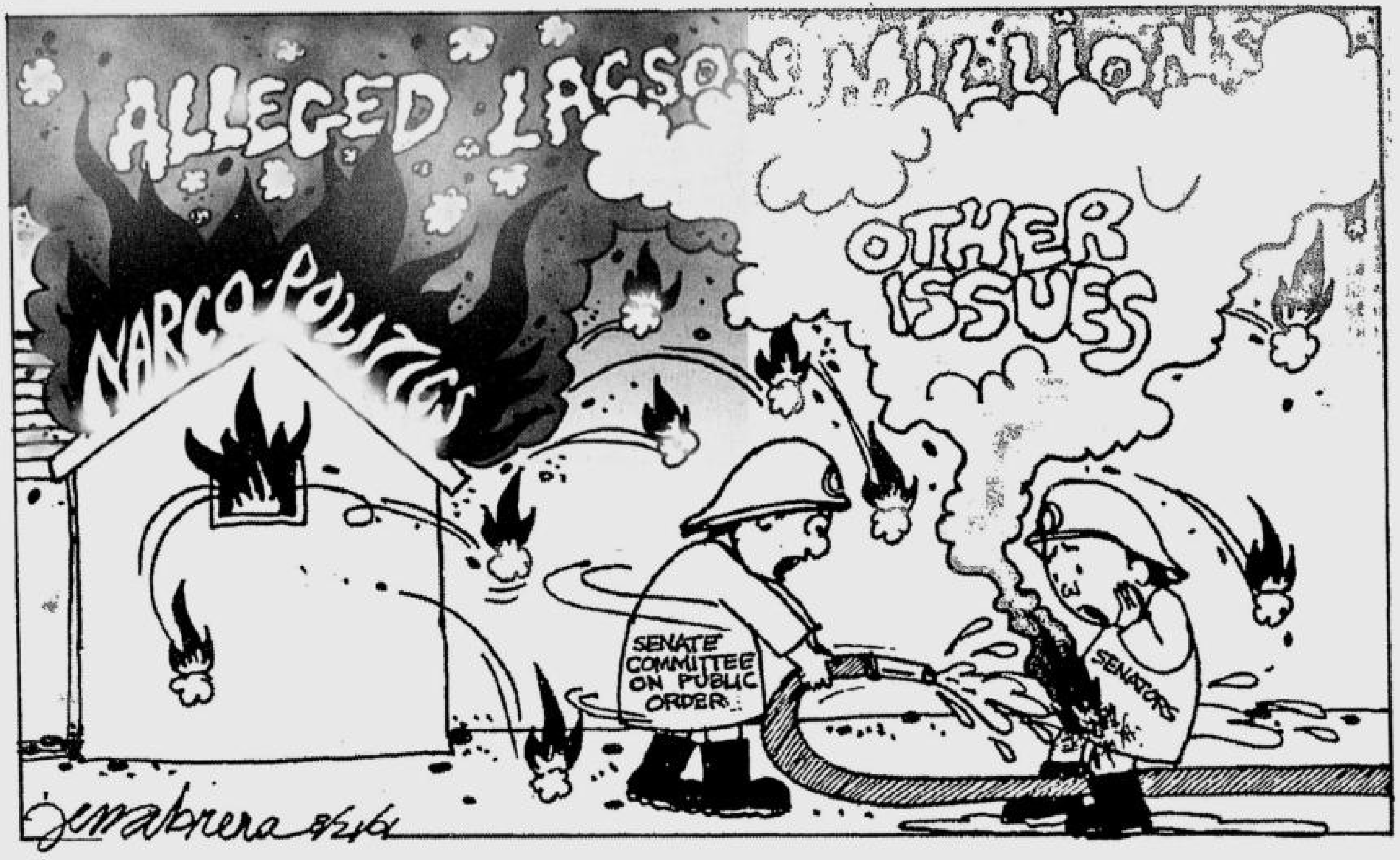
But one major feature that probably accounted for the big death toll was the use of iron grilles on the windows. Iron grilles are a common anti-burglar device in Philippine houses and buildings. Their use on the second and third floors might be understandable. But on the fourth, fifth and sixth floors? And even if grilles had to be used, a part of it, enough to allow a person to exit from the room, could have been built in such a way that it could be opened from the inside in an emergency.

Accountability

THE OWNERS of the Ozone Disco were let off by the court with four-year prison terms. Together with four other board members they were fined a total of more than P20 million. That is certainly a light penalty for the crime of reckless imprudence that killed or injured more than 250 people.

What will the ruling of the courts be on those whose imprudence and negligence caused the death of 72 people at the Manor Hotel? It's time the government threw the book at those who would trifle with the lives and safety of other people. It's time the responsible government officials and private entrepreneurs were taught a lesson that they—and people in similar situations—will never forget.

Judging from the shocking death tolls in marine disasters, airplane crashes, bus accidents and fires in government and private buildings, Filipinos do not place a big value on human life. They say: "Bahala na. (We leave it to God.)" But we need not take such a fatalistic attitude when our safety is concerned. We can do something about the problem, and we can begin by demanding rigorous enforcement of safety laws and ordinances and strict accountability from our officials and entrepreneurs.



Withholding tax, water and power rates going up

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

I DON'T believe it myself, but there are some paranoid people who see a sinister plot in the revelations of Angelo Mawanay, alias Ador. They think that the fact that the personalities Mawanay has linked to various crimes (Senators Panfilo Lacson, Loren Legarda, Noli de Castro) also happen to be "presidential timber" for the 2004 elections is not just a coincidence. Another "presidential aspirant," Education Secretary Raul Roco, will also be linked by Mawanay to the smuggling and sale of 10,000 cell phones, according to Tony Carpio. Senate President Franklin Drilon and Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. are expected to be exposed next because they also happen to be "presidential material."

If these paranoids are to be believed, Mawanay is a one-man wrecking crew assigned to destroy the chances of likely presidential candidates in the 2004 elections. His handler and protector now is Col. Victor Corpus, chief of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, former professor of cadet Lacson at the Philippine Military Academy but now his bitter enemy. In short, these paranoids see the hand of Malacañang in the "demolition jobs" against the "presidential aspirants."

These paranoids ask: Why did the P3 million for the team sent to the United States to look for the Lacson bank accounts come from Malacañang and not from the AFP? Why did Corpus submit his report directly to the President and not through his superiors in the AFP? And why is the President the only top official expressing complete trust in Corpus?

I think they've reading too many mystery novels or seen too many spy movies.

* * *

Truth to tell, President Macapagal does not need any enemies at the rate her subordinates are sabotaging her administration. She promised there would be no new taxes or increase in taxes. So what did her newly appointed finance secretary, Jose Isidro Camacho, do as soon as he warmed his seat? He doubled the withholding tax of professionals, entertainers and athletes.

When the Water Regulatory Commission approved a 50-percent increase in the water rates being charged by Maynilad Water Service Inc., the President stopped it and ordered more studies. But now the same regulatory commission is all set to approve the increase anyway.

The President also assured that passage of the Power Reform Bill would bring down electricity rates. But now that the bill is a law, the Energy Regulatory Commission is about to approve Meralco's petition for a 30-centavo per kwh increase in rates. No less than newly appointed Energy Secretary Vicente Perez told the Bankers Association of the Philippines that "the government favors an immediate approval of a rate hike petition" and that "the new ERC should consider giving Meralco a rate increase."

The message is clear: Perez wants the supposedly independent ERC to approve the rate hike Meralco is asking for.

With such Cabinet members working very hard to make President Macapagal unpopular among the masses, she does not need any enemies. There are termites in her administration surreptitiously eating up its foundations.

* * *

All the members of the ERC are new, with no known experience in utility regulation. There is no representative of consumers. One of the nominees, not yet sworn in, is Carlos Alindada, former managing partner of the accounting firm Sycip, Gorres and Velayo, which is also the accountant of Meralco. The new ERC is clearly pro-business and pro-utility. Hence the imprudent statement of Perez is a clear signal to them.

Why does Perez favor the Meralco rate increase? So that, he said, the 10-percent government stake in Meralco will increase from P4 billion to P7 billion, or an increase of P3 billion.

But the P3 billion increase is not even half of the additional burden that Meralco consumers will carry with the increase, which is P6.6 billion a year.

As an alternative to Perez's suggestion to increase government income, Nasecore (National Association of Electricity Consumers for Reforms) has proposed the following:

1. It will agree to the 30 centavos pkwh increase or P6.6 billion (at 22 billion kwh annual sales) additional revenue per year.
2. Combine this with the P18 to P20 billion refund under ERB case 93-118 and acquire controlling interest in Meralco.
3. Add the P3 to P5 billion annual earnings of Meralco to the government revenue stream.
4. Add to this the income from other Meralco joint ventures such as Rockwell, First Gas, First Generation, etc. to further bolster the government revenue stream.

In such a situation, whatever increase is imposed will redound to the direct and clear benefit of Meralco customers, Nasecore said.

There is another public hearing today on the Meralco petition. Nasecore appeals to the public to attend the hearing and for media to give the hearing adequate coverage.

* * *

By the way, Maynilad and Meralco, which are both asking for rate increases, are owned by the Lopez family. It is reportedly having cash flow problems, hence the need for more cash through rate increase. What a deal. They're going to make the public pay for their cash shortage.

Blasts from the past

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

A COUPLE of weeks ago, they were still at it. South Korea was still vehemently protesting the release of Japan's official history textbooks, for use in schools, that depicted Japan's militarist venture half a century ago in largely benign terms. The textbooks made no mention of the rape of Nanking and the mind-boggling atrocities the Japanese troops wreaked in Korea and the Philippines. Certainly, they made no mention of the sex slaves, also called comfort women, that the Japanese troops made of many Korean and Filipino women.

Both the Korean elderly and youth took part in rallies in various parts of South Korea, condemning the Japanese interpretation of its occupation of the Asian countries during World War II. The Japanese prime minister was a particular hate object for promising during the elections to visit the so-called heroes' graveyard in Japan, which the South Koreans, as well indeed as many Japanese, considered paying tribute to emperor-worship and Japan's militarist past.

All of it made me marvel at how some people could look at the past with such passion, treating it not as something one routinely pays homage to, but as something that throbs in the air as vitally as today's news. It made me stand in awe at how some people could look at the past not as a record of events that you file in the hard disc in the mind, but as a living event that matters like life and death itself. I particularly found it impressive that the generation in South Korea who had gone through the ordeal of the Japanese occupation had managed to transmit their experiences to the young and made them share their outrage and agitation over Japan's attempt at a historical whitewash.

Today is an especially good time to ponder that thought. Aug. 21 is a most unusual date in Philippine history in that it marks two very important events, both of which became turning points. But you wonder, given that Aug. 21 has come and gone in the past few years without fanfare or comment, if people still remember them. In the past, Aug. 21 even spawned a whole organization, the August Twenty One Movement (Atom). I don't know if most Filipinos still recall it, or have even heard of it.

The first event took place exactly 30 years ago today. That was the Plaza Miranda bombing. I still remember vividly how it was on Aug. 21, 1971. By early evening that night, the country was gripped in terror. Where I lived, which was a rough neighborhood in Sta. Mesa, home to rock bands and drug pushers, all the transistor radios were blaring out the news while I walked home: The Liberal Party political rally in Plaza Miranda had just been bombed. Several were dead and scores were hurt. It wasn't known how many of the LP candidates were among the dead and wounded. Jovito Salonga, the leading LP senatorial candidate, had taken the brunt of the blast (it wasn't known yet what had caused it). He was either dead or dying.

Don McLean's "American Pie" was the hit song then, and I suddenly remembered his refrain about "the day the music died." It hit a chord in my soul. That was how it felt that day, except that in lieu of the music, it was light itself that died. The light of goodness, decency and freedom, as symbolized by Plaza Miranda, the Hyde Park of the East. That night, you had the sensation of the country being plunged into deepest darkness.

Miraculously, Salonga survived. He himself gives a gripping account of his ordeal in his book, "A Journey of Struggle and Hope." I do not know why we are not marking this event today with the earnestness it deserves.

The other event is better known, though how much better I do not know. That was, of course, the murder of Ninoy Aquino, a case that, like the Plaza Miranda bombing, remains unsolved to this day.

I also remember vividly how that day felt. Where I lived, which was in a BLISS unit in Pag-asa, the afternoon had suddenly turned Lenten. Everyone stayed indoors, including the kids, and it wasn't because of the intermittent rain amid the sweltering heat. The television stations gave out a collective moan, while Aquino's loved ones wailed in grief and anger and Luther Custodio stood dumbstruck before a microphone, unable to explain what had happened.

That day also gave off a sense of the music, or light, dying. Of all that we knew to be good, decent and just being blotted out of the world and darkness come to take its place. It was in that deepest darkness of course that Filipinos found the light again, or felt compelled to look for it. Notwithstanding that Cory's rule did not turn out to be the opposite of Marcos', as she vowed it would be, I do not see, too, why we are not marking the 18th anniversary of that event with the furious unleashing of remembrance it deserves.

I do not think it is a surprise that South Korea and Japan, the two countries that are locked in a furious debate about Japan's conduct in the last war, are also the two most prosperous countries this side of the world. I've always thought there were very stout links between progress and a sense of right and wrong, between advancement and a sense of justice, between prosperity and a sense of history. It is the capacity to remember that gives purpose, determination and reassurance that one hasn't strayed too far away from the right path. It is the sense of the past that gives one a sense of the future. The phrase, "a sense of history," does carry with it the double meaning of a sense of provenance and a sense of destiny. The one is inextricably linked to the other, as Rizal himself said.

And I do not think it is a surprise that we who find it so easy to turn tragedy into farce, the present into text jokes and the past into a pit of forgetfulness, are at pains to barge into the 20th century, let alone the 21st. Guess whom the joke is on in the end.

Welcome to Megawati

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

TODAY new Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri arrives in Manila for an overnight state visit while President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo leaves tomorrow morning for a two-day state visit to Brunei, prior to flying to Singapore. Megawati will be honored at a state banquet tonight at Malacañang Palace. It should not be lost on us Filipinos that the new Indonesian president has chosen to make Manila the first stop of her five-nation swing through Southeast Asia, her first foreign sojourn since assuming the top post in the world's fourth most populous nation. Her visit is an affirmation of the long-standing closeness of the ties between our two countries.

* * *

Much is being said of the similarities between the only two women Presidents in our region. Both are 54-years old and daughters of ex-presidents, the late President Sukarno, who is considered the father of independent Indonesia, and the late President Diosdado Macapagal. The two former presidents were friends a generation ago and co-architects of Maphilindo, a regional alliance that was one of Asean's forerunners. Megawati and Ms Macapagal were thrust into the highest posts by turbulent political developments that led to the ouster of their ineffective predecessors. The world will be watching how Megawati will fare in uniting her highly fractious nation and reviving its battered economy, just as it has watched Ms Macapagal's seven-month rule with bated breath.

Let's welcome Megawati and wish her luck. She needs every bit of it.

* * *

Just as we in Manila note that the Philippines is the first country being visited by Megawati since she became president, the Kuala Lumpur press also took note of the fact that Ms Macapagal visited Malaysia first. Foreign Undersecretary Lauro Baja told me at the recent National Day reception of the Korean Embassy that recent moves to strengthen political ties by the leaders of Southeast Asia constitute a very welcome and healthy development. This means that the leaders recognize the need to promote greater stability in the region, after the recent political and economic troubles it has undergone. All these, Baja said, can only work to the advantage of the Philippines.

* * *

Baja stressed the importance of "chemistry" among leaders and noted that this was quite evident between Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad and President Macapagal, whom the latter referred to as "a brother and role model" for her. Baja also noted the big role Mahathir played in forging the peace agreement between the Philippine government and the MILF that was signed in KL in time for Ms Macapagal's visit. As a Malaysian newspaper noted, KL was "a good place for such a meeting because it enjoys the trust and confidence of the MILF." Malaysia is a member of the ceasefire monitoring team, together with Indonesia and Libya, all influential members of the Organization of Islamic Conference.

* * *

Baja pointed out that apart from promoting stability in the region, it is also to Malaysia's best interest to stabilize the situation in Mindanao, inasmuch as trouble there invariably sends thousands of Filipinos fleeing to Sabah, which is administered by Malaysia. There are half a million Filipinos who had illegally entered Sabah and settled there. A fresh exodus from Mindanao could further strain Malaysia's resources.

Instead of promoting war, Malaysia is said to be truly interested in developing the vast tracts of land in Mindanao, especially those occupied largely by Muslims, for the cultivation of palm trees for oil. It should also be noted that Muslim Filipinos are being encouraged to go for schooling to Malaysia where the institutions are considered "less radical" than some of those in the Middle East.

* * *

Baja later sent me copies of newspaper clippings about Ms Macapagal's visit to KL furnished by Ambassador Jose Brillantes. It was evident from those clippings that the Malaysian press considered President Macapagal's foreign visit as "a scoop" and that, as the Star of KL put it, "in her brief stay, Malaysia was charmed by Ms Macapagal's poise and intelligence." The Star described her as "a person of learning (who) knows what she is talking about." The KL press noted that Ms Macapagal "struck the right cord with Dr. Mahathir" who is celebrating the 20th year of his strongman rule. This contrasted with the souring of the relationship between Mahathir and her predecessor, Joseph Estrada, over the Anwar Ibrahim issue. In fact the KL press noted that Ms Macapagal "even went to the extent of saying that if it displeased (Mahathir) for her to meet (Ibrahim's wife, opposition leader) Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, she would not do so."

I suppose President Macapagal was being pragmatic about the issue. At this point, she needs to sustain Mahathir's cooperation in strengthening the peace process vis-à-vis the MILF and in attracting Malaysian businessmen back to Mindanao after they pulled out following the Asian financial crisis and the eruption of full-scale war there during the Estrada administration.

* * *

The KL press noted that Ms Macapagal has "a very clear agenda, and wants to eradicate poverty and bring progress in the Southern Philippines. For that she needs peace."

The KL press was also quite optimistic that the once-stormy relationship between the two countries is now "on the right track" and will, in fact, "blossom under Arroyo's leadership."

As the KL press noted, Malaysia was suspected in the past of helping the Mindanao rebels. But now, indications are that, as the Star put it, "Malaysia believes in being a good neighbor." For one thing, the KL press is talking about a "cordial resolution" to RP's Sabah claim and Ms Macapagal, who is reviving the BIMP-EAGA concept of former President Ramos, spoke of opening a consulate in Sabah. She has invited the King of Malaysia and Mahathir to visit Manila. The King, who is elected among the chief sultans of the various Malaysian states once every five years, will come in February while Mahathir will visit before the year ends.

* * *

Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon and his Malaysian counterpart held talks to enhance the exchange of tourists between the two countries, especially to destinations bound by a common culture. Gordon announced that a Malaysian company will be introducing regular charter flights from KL and China to the Philippines, while twice-weekly flights from Kota Kinabalu in Sabah will land at Clark International Airport. There will also be two flights a week from Shanghai to Clark and from Shenzen in China to Cebu.

A disheartening weekend

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

"WHAT kind of country is this where people are dying by drowning and by fire on the same day?" a friend wanted to know over the weekend.

It was not exactly an uplifting time to be Pinoy. Aside from the deluge wrought by Typhoon Jolina, and the tragedy at the Quezon City Manor Hotel, there was also the spectacle at the Senate to contend with, and the sinking feeling that as a nation we seem to be going nowhere. We're distracted from the urgent task of addressing the problems of poverty and alienation experienced by more than half of our people by fervid sideshows like the Senate hearing on Col. Victor Corpus' exposés.

What some commentators have come to call "narco-politics" is of course cause for serious concern. If drug money is indeed being used to fuel candidacies and buy the loyalties of politicians and police and military officials, then we could be on the road to being the next Colombia, where drug lords determine government policy and effectively run the country.

But the trouble is that Friday's hearing, while generating enough heat and righteous anger to fire a power plant, shed little light on the issue at hand: a senator's alleged involvement in drug trafficking and money laundering. Why did the senators summon Corpus and Angelo Mawanay? Was it to hear and weigh the evidence they held and thereby determine the guilt or innocence of those they implicated in their grave charges? Or was it to badger Corpus and Mawanay? To hold their credibility to question and therefore weaken their case?

* * *

I HOPE I'm wrong, but should Corpus vindicate himself despite the Senate's attempts to demolish his case, then all the senators who took part in these proceedings could be considered accomplices in these high crimes.

Of course, Corpus didn't do himself any favor by airing his charges through the media first, then playing coy with his evidence. And by bungling the revelation of the supposed identity of Lacson's alleged link to the drug trade, displaying the photo of a man who turned out to be the aide of another senator, Corpus grievously weakened his credibility.

But then again, did it have to take a full hour of the Senate's time to clear the senator's deputy chief of staff and to rap Corpus' knuckles? Especially since Corpus had already publicly apologized and admitted his mistake?

To be sure, the public has yet to know for sure who's telling the truth here. The process of getting to the bottom of Corpus' allegations, and "Ador's" stories, is still ongoing. But what we would have wanted to see at the hearing was a proper focus on the alarming possibility of drug-driven governance. What did questions about Corpus' behavior at his trial for subversion or tales of "talking to trees" have to do with whether national officials are engaged in crime?

As this is being written, senators are taking the floor of the Senate to defend their actions and the conduct of the hearing, aware perhaps of how the body's reputation was tarnished by the proceedings. We wish them luck, because our battered sensibilities can't take much more disillusionment.

* * *

A RADIO reporter, speaking a few hours after the fire at the QC Manor Hotel was put out, said he observed some of the survivors standing in front of the hotel, their arms up in blessing and "praying over" the structure.

Obviously, these survivors were among the participants in an evangelical prayer meeting at nearby Araneta Coliseum, for which they had traveled from the provinces. It was just their bad luck that they chose for their lodgings this no-star institution, built as a commercial building and apparently haphazardly converted into a hotel.

The fact that they had come to Manila to take part in a "healing" session only added to the pain and irony of their situation. I would like to believe, though, that their prayers helped minimize the number of fatalities and casualties in this absurd and unconscionable tragedy.

Newspaper reports say that the building permit granted to the owner of the hotel was for a commercial building. Only later was it converted into a hotel, with grossly inadequate fire safety measures, apparently without official knowledge. But last year, the city's fire marshal issued a warning to the building owner about his violations of the fire safety code. It was bad enough that a year went by without any structural changes being made. Worse, it appears that City Hall personnel had already gone through the building and seen with their own eyes that it had been converted into a hotel, a firetrap, in fact. Didn't anyone even bother to check under what sort of building permit the building's construction was allowed? Isn't the fate of the 70 or so dead weighing on their consciences now?

* * *

TV NEWS footage showed one firefighter angrily denouncing the suspension of the chief of the Quezon City fire department, saying he was "unfairly" singled out and deemed guilty without an investigation or hearing.

Perhaps this firefighter should be reminded that the QC Manor Hotel fire is only the latest in a series of conflagrations where negligence on the part of engineering and fire officials was a factor.

One would have thought that after the Ozone tragedy, Quezon City officials would have learned a lesson or two. Primary of these should have been the need to check and double-check building owners' compliance with fire safety rules. This is what they promised to do after the Ozone fire, and perhaps this is why the QC Manor Hotel got a notice. But why was a year allowed to go by without someone verifying if the recommendations were indeed carried out?

If only for this lapse, QC fire officials all deserve to be sacked, if not sentenced to prison.

Thunderous silence

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

WITH THE EXCEPTION of Loren Legarda, no other senator or representative bothered to comment on the Mehan Gardens controversy. Neither has anyone opened his mouth to criticize Malacañang's interference in the cultural agencies.

But people are talking. They're saying that Joseph Estrada was criticized for appointing Gloria Angara as chairperson of the Cultural Center when she should have been elected by her peers, but just recently President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo reinstated the Endriga board instead of waiting for the Supreme Court decision. Well, maybe that's the aim of Ms Macapagal's PR: to make her act more and more like her predecessor since their perception is that the former president was the darling of the *masa*. You understand this is of supreme importance because everybody and his grandmother will be running for an elective position in 2004. (Face it, government is the only game in town. You want a real job you'll have to be an OFW.) By this time, we all know that the candidate doesn't have to discuss the program or policies he wants to pursue or, come to think of it, he may not even have any. All you need is lots of money to buy the entertainment for your sorties and ads. Preferably you should have had a previous media program for name recall showing your great concern for the poor. Is there something I missed among the qualifications of our future candidates? Oh, yes, it helps if you're a tad better looking than most.

Aside from ribbing the President for her paper boat metaphor, the opposition has done little else. Well, yes, a couple of them were vigorously defending Panfilo Lacson and the rest were arguing about the chairmanship of committees. They are obviously totally indifferent to culture, to the ugliness of Manila, to laws protecting cultural properties.

Come to think of it, it isn't only the opposition. Nobody in government seems to care whether the premier city looks like a pig sty and is run like one; whether its open spaces disappear in an avalanche of concrete and whether the only piece of tourist attraction it has—Intramuros—is abandoned to illegal construction, criminal elements and garbage. Rumors say that Intramuros Administrator Butch Ferrer is going around waving a paper with Ronnie Zamora's signature that gave him permission to award a contract to Offshore Development Corp. without benefit of bidding, which paper never saw the light of day during the early days of investigation. This, they tell me, is why he's still in office despite an order of suspension from the Sandiganbayan. The tourism secretary was abroad again, so there was no way of getting his opinion.

In the meantime, another restaurant has been illegally constructed right on the street fronting Letran College, over the protests of the poor rector who couldn't even get a polite answer from the Department of Tourism.

Perhaps they're all taking a cue from the President. Her State of the Nation Address had zilch about culture or the environment. This is not to say that Malacañang hasn't poked its finger in the elections of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts although its Vicky Garchitorena who's taking the flak as the villain. Rumors are that former Sen. Leticia Ramos-Shahani was heard crowing all over UP that she was the anointed one of the Palace.

If true, it stands to reason. The President showed no interest in culture in her days as a senator and vice president. She has never taken a stand on any cultural issue. Obviously, for her it's a matter of politics. It cannot be that she believes that Shahani is the best bet to head the country's foremost cultural agency simply because culture is not part of her agenda. She has reportedly said that it's okay if Shahani is not exactly conversant with cultural issues since "she will learn."

As a matter of fact, the lack of representation of Malacañang in cultural affairs these past seven months speaks for itself. And the fact that her Sona mentions nothing about the environment, preservation or heritage just about sums it up.

Unfortunately it isn't only the executive that appears to be totally indifferent, but the legislature as well. Which is a pity because what then can we expect in the matter of heritage preservation? It's downright embarrassing to admit that whatever their motives, Ferdinand and Imelda did the most for artists and Filipino culture. Their successors don't even consider it worthy of discussion.

Even the practical side of landmark preservation isn't given due consideration. I am almost convinced that government doesn't really believe that cultural heritage plays a major part in tourism. While Cyprus, for example, is not getting any aid from foreign financial agencies like Unesco and it is not exactly rich, its government is doing all it can to preserve the architecture and historical sites, such as their Gothic cathedrals. The abbey of Belle Paix and the Tree of Idleness beside the café where Lawrence Durrell wrote "Bitter Lemons" is part of a tour and concerts are held in the now empty chapel as well as in the Roman ruins at Salamis near the beach. Certainly this is not because the Turkish Cypriot government likes Catholic churches or approves of Durrell's pro Greek sentiments. It's very simple: tourists aside from staying at beach resorts happen to be interested in things of this nature. I could be wrong of course. It's entirely possible that the few tourists that are brave enough to drop by these days aren't interested in our history or culture but only in gambling and women.

This being the other state of the nation, we can proceed to do a Rip Van Winkle. Wake me up when it's over.

(Thankfully last week, the DENR issued a cease and desist order to the city government so the Mehan Gardens is temporarily safe.)

Home

YOUNGBLOOD

Wendell

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

IT'S been two nights now since the last time I saw her, and already I feel much older. Maybe it's because of the tension weighing on my shoulders or my desperation to get her back. It seems as if ages have passed since she left.

I couldn't sleep last night. My mind kept going back to some old memories, from the corniest to the most incredible experiences we had. Like the times I would look her straight in the eye as she told a story and seeing how serious she was, I'd burst out in a loud laughter. Then she would pinch my arm and I'd scream in pain. And she would tell me I'm too vexatious. And I would tell her she looked even more beautiful when she was angry.

I've loved her since we were young—ever since we first played *patintero* one starry night and until now when I'm feeling so lonely. I've never felt so insecure before. I have wonder why this had to happen when I've grown mature enough to know that loving her is tantamount to setting her free. But I hate to think about it.

I never believed that a difference in age matters in a relationship between a man and a woman. I don't care if society would treat me with contempt just because I love a woman who is 5 years older than me. And if I were to choose between two lifetimes, I would chose a lifetime of being mocked by people and having the woman I love over spending my whole life with a woman my age but whom I never loved. And I suppose everyone will make the same choice.

When she set out to become a nurse, I decided to take up philosophy in a university that was quite far from our hometown. I didn't see her for four years. To fill the emptiness of being away, I wrote her letters. She seldom replied, but I was very patient because I knew her course could be tough and demand a lot of her time. The only thing that bothered me was what my mama told me: that distance could make strangers out of friends, and that if there's anything that could ever destroy a man, it was loneliness.

I was still in college when she graduated. She was one of the brightest graduates her school had ever produced. And when she passed the board exams, I was even prouder of her. I would tell anyone who care to listen about her plan to build makeshift health centers in the remotest areas of our hometown. And because she was so good, she was able to get a good job in the best hospital in our province. Not long afterwards, she was promoted to head nurse.

Meanwhile, I graduated from college. And the first thought I have was spending time with her again.

I was euphoric when I saw her again. I didn't even notice the weary look in her. It's true indeed that persons who are close to us become invisible because they no longer speak with their mouth but from their hearts to our hearts.

We spent the whole day walking through mangroves and the beach. We stopped to watch children play *patintero* under the heat of the summer sun. Memories flooded back and she started crying. She became hysterical, and that was when I sensed that something had gone wrong.

She was leaving for the United States, she finally blurted out. The announcement left me momentarily speechless. She planned to find a good job in the United States. She wanted to earn more than what a typical nurse could earn here. She was convinced that great opportunities awaited here there and she stood to earned a bigger income.

I desperately wanted to ask where her brain had gone at the moment. Had the system eaten her? What about our sick who were here? What if I became sick? Would I just call the quack doctor next door and ask for a herbal cure? What exactly was the difference between the sick at home and the sick abroad? The dollar?

I knew that professions in our time and age were no longer a way of life but a means of livelihood; that no one could live on principles alone. I thought of how prices of commodities had been skyrocketing even as the value of the peso was plummeting down. Even toothpicks cannot be had without toil or sweat.

And what about us? I was screaming that I didn't even notice that tears had started to streak down my cheeks. We've barely seen each other and now you want to go away? You told me to look for someone else, someone with whom I could feel at home. But you are my home. For like they say, home is where the heart is.

I remembered how happy I was just seeing her shadow in a restaurant or how hearing her voice on the phone would ease the tension inside me. After all the sacrifices I endured just to make our rainbows meet, she wanted to back off.

Have you ever taken into consideration the fact that you're brown and you're Asian? I asked her. You'd look ridiculous acting according to their culture when you have your own culture. What do you propose to do? Scrub your skin white and arrange for a nose lift? Tell me, are you now one of them, too?

The United States promises many things, she told me after a long silence. You work in a year, you get to own a car. Here even a decade of work won't allow you to buy one. You'll just find yourself buried in debt.

You're wrong, I argued. This is your country! How long have you been reciting the Panatang Makabayan or singing "Lupang Hinirang" without taking them to heart? A year? A decade? A lifetime?

She told me I just didn't get it. Someday when I would be her age, she said, I would dream of going there too, just like everybody else. Someday, I would spit out my principles so that I could take in food instead. Someday, I'd just find myself flying to the United States.

I was silent. How I wished we were still young and full of pride and patriotism. How I wished we could go back to where we started. If it were possible. I would have gone back to our younger days and I would have clung to them like a sick man clings to his doctor for the cure. But it was too late for that.

I knew that the next time I'd hear from her she would have some more sad news. Like how difficult it is to deal with people who judged others by their color. And then I would weep just as I wept when grandfather passed away.

Only two nights ago, I saw her. And now she is gone. After a decade of loving her, it's the hardest thing to lose her. But I must set her free.

Whatever it is in America that she is looking for, I hope she will find it. I'll just call the nearest quack doctor if one of my siblings gets sick. I'll just tell them to be patient until she comes back so we can have the service of a nurse for free, although I doubt if she will ever come back.

Now that I have assumed part of the responsibility of bringing up my younger brothers, I don't know if I will ever change my mind. I have seen people lining in offices seeking employment. I have seen myself in their place too. What if she was right? What if, in my desperation to feed my siblings, I am forced to seek employment abroad? Will I leave my home, too?

I hope the time will never come.

Wendell, 20, is a recent graduate of the University of St. La Salle.

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Congress a refuge of scoundrels

YOUR editorial of Aug. 9, "Senate on trial," can't be repeated often enough, especially if those whose attention is being called are playing deaf and dumb. It's silly and immature of "honorable" representatives to think their role as oppositionist is only to oppose anything and everything coming from the opposite side.

It was only eight months ago when the Senate figured so badly during the impeachment trial when the opposition voted against opening the second envelope. Now, they will ignore the ignominy of it by trying once more to keep the truth from being revealed about Sen. Panfilo Lacson's secret bank deposits.

Why all these attempts to hide?

No need to belabor ourselves any longer. What was hidden is now out in the open: this secretive attitude has been brewing in both houses of Congress for so long, and slowly but surely getting worse. It's time we nipped it in the bud.

The fact is that the legislature has become the refuge of scoundrels because of some people's delusion or false belief that this is where they can most effectively manipulate things for their own personal gain. (Didn't we, not too long ago, have to deal with the likes of De Guzman and Jalosjos? Didn't Marcos start learning the ropes of deception as a representative?)

By the looks of it, one is tempted to say that Congress has indeed become the training ground for nefarious activities, which is why many of those who lingered in it developed a fearlessness of laws, whether man's or God's. When confronted with a misdemeanor, the automatic response is to use all the means in their power to fight off efforts to bring them to justice. Of course, the problem gets messier when the culprit is the type who has no qualms about killing anyone who crosses his path.

So, what is happening to our country?

Firstly, the quality of leadership has obviously deteriorated, which is one reason Filipinos have been emigrating to other lands. The garbage—both symbolic and real—is piling up and no one seems to notice or care.

Someone said we are suffering from a "damaged culture." Another said it is the result of a "damaged national consciousness." In plain words, it is a damage caused by one's selfish nature. For the fact is that *kanya-kanyahan* is a derivative of the Western idea of "one-upmanship" which gave a reason to selfish pursuits. And our youth are being consumed by this hedonistic lifestyle which, because it is basically selfish, can only lead the depravity.

Where is the leader who cares enough to initiate the needed changes?—**ERNESTO K. MAGTOTO, Las Piñas City**

NCCA shouldn't be treated as a political commodity

I WILL be much obliged to you if you publish this letter and help draw public attention, including that of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, to the unwelcome move to appoint former Sen. Leticia Shahani as chair of the National Commission on Culture and Arts (NCCA), and needlessly replace Jaime Laya, who is qualified, experienced and a true patron of the arts. Considering that the qualifications of Shahani pale in comparison to Laya's where advocacy for the development of the arts and culture is concerned, this move is a step backward.

The article, "All is set for Shahani NCCA 'homecoming,'" in your Sunday Lifestyle Section last July 29, 2001 said it all: "Her homecoming will also end three years of a largely empty search for a government office after her Senate term." It is of public knowledge that she tried and failed to bag the post of United Nations secretary general, her arduous campaign but resounding defeat in the gubernatorial race in Pangasinan and her desperate bid to be the running mate of Joseph Estrada in 1998.

After all these fruitless endeavors, appointing Shahani to the NCCA would amount to dumping her in the NCCA's lap which is an insult. It also sends a very strong signal to the arts community, that this administration is not serious in its advocacy of the arts and culture. By rewarding a political supporter with a position in the NCCA where she is not fit to be, the NCCA has become one of the spoils in this political system.

Instead of seeking a position in government, Shahani should give the other political supporters and allies of the President a chance as she already had her day during the term of her brother, former President Fidel V. Ramos. Having earned her niche in history as a senator, Shahani should gracefully exit and settle into quiet retirement and perhaps engage in less political activities.

One of the things ailing Philippine society is the lack of awareness of our national identity resulting in our lack of national pride, dignity and unity. Developing the arts and culture is a key element in shaping our national identity. It is only in realizing that we are one that we, Filipinos, can start appreciating our shared destiny.

The NCCA plays a key role in raising awareness and appreciation of our national identity. In this time of much dissent and division amongst us, we cannot afford to sacrifice the NCCA by using it as a political commodity.—**ROSE MARIE JIMENEZ DE ARENAS, Makati City**

A Boy Scout salute to PDI

THANK you for giving us the opportunity to air our side on the story titled "Boy Scout 'na babae'?" last Aug. 3. The INQUIRER's follow-up story, "RP's top Boy Scout is a girl," which appeared the following day, gave equal space and prominence to the Boys Scouts of the Philippines. The story rectified the misimpression and clarified issues created by the first story.

The INQUIRER's move only proved its adherence to journalism's ethical standard of fairness and responsibility. Furthermore, the effort shown by Stella Gonzales and Rey Leyesa in conducting the interview reflects the INQUIRER staff's sense of professionalism.

The 3.7 million BSP members, salute you, sirs and mesdames.—**CARLOS C. ESCUDERO, secretary general, Boy Scout of the Philippines, 181 Natividad Almeda-Lopez St., Ermita, Manila**

MADAME PRESIDENT GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO

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LETTERS

A grand design to discredit AFP

THIS has reference to the article published in your newspaper last Aug. 9, titled "Priest says general conniving with Abu," and the editorial that came out on Aug. 10.

We write to express our disappointment and bewilderment regarding the allegations of Fr. Cirilo Nacorda that Brig. Gen. Romeo Dominguez and four other officers connived with the Abu Sayyaf. It really pains us to read false accusations like these thrown at officers we have known to be men of upright character.

We firmly believe that the allegations are malicious and preposterous. We see this unfortunate event as part of a "grand design" to discredit the military as an organization. The good general, Col. Jovenal Narcise and the three other officers are but victims of circumstances.

We are worried that if this smear campaign against the five officers will continue unabated, the fallout on the Armed Forces of the Philippines as a whole will be tremendous.

We may have opposing views on various issues but in these times when national unity is of great import to the nation facing a crisis brought about by the notorious Abu Sayyaf, we call on everybody's support for the AFP as it continues discharging its mandate of protecting our people. Charging our leaders with proven track record of integrity, courage and loyalty to the service, like Brigadier General Dominguez and Colonel Narcise, with all these false accusations will dampen the morale of our soldiers.

We would like to categorically say that there is no truth to the allegations. Whoever is behind this campaign should know better than to engage in trial by publicity. If the priest really has strong evidence to support his allegations, why doesn't he bring the matter to the proper court or agency? He should file charges, if need be, to give the five officers the chance to defend themselves.

These accusations are a disservice to the very organization that relentlessly pursues the various threats to national security at the risk of the lives of its soldiers in order to uphold its constitutional mandate of protecting the Filipino people. Definitely, the allegations caused severe damage not only to the concerned officers, but also to the AFP as an institution.—**COL. REYNALDO B. MAPAGU, PA (GSC), Office of Deputy Chief of Staff for Civil Military Operations, J7, AFP, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City**

How are retiree's benefits computed?

THE SOCIAL Security System failed to state in any of its guidebooks, pamphlets or any other material that the basis for computation of financial benefits such as retirement is the average monthly salary credit for the last five years for members who have completed 10 and 20 credited years of service (CYS). Because of that innocuous provision, I ended up receiving the minimum retirement pension.

During my 24 years of employment with San Miguel Corp., my average monthly salary credit was at the maximum bracket. After my employment in 1992, I stopped paying my contributions for some time. Unaware of the foregoing provision, I decided to resume my contribution on a voluntary basis in 1995, thinking that the more I contributed, the bigger the benefits I would receive, regardless of the amount I paid. But there were even times when I failed to remit my contributions. Much to my surprise, I learned in 1998 that the basis for computation of financial benefits was my last five years of monthly salary credit.

Had I been aware of this provision, I would have stopped making any contributions in 1992 or paid an amount equal to if not higher than the amount deducted from my salary during my employment.

I attempted to appeal my case with SSS management, but this was turned down.—**JESUS B. SADSAD, Lot 3 Blk 3, Doña Socorro St., Lourdes Heights Subd., Del Rosario, San Fernando, Pampanga**

Demolition job

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

SURREAL. You allow some shady former undercover agent, Ador Mawanay, to publicly accuse Sen. Panfilo Lacson of nearly every heinous crime imaginable—drug-dealing, kidnapping, murder, plunder—and then launch a Senate investigation inviting this character to testify. He shows up, complete with a backpack and 15 kilos of rock salt to show how he allegedly delivered shabu in behalf of Lacson. Instead, Sen. Loren Legarda brings up another accusation he never made public, this one about alleged sales of smuggled cell phone to her. Mawanay is asked to explain, not the shabu in backpacks but this alleged sale, including how you fit 1,000 cell phones into a van. Verbal fireworks erupt and in the end, Mawanay is ordered detained.

The nation is plunging into the depths of the unreal, where the accused remain guilty until proven innocent, where witnesses are detained, where legislators stop legislating and dabble in judicial proceedings. Watching our wise senators in last Friday's massacre, all I could think of was the grouchy and tempestuous Queen of Hearts in Lewis Carroll's "Alice in Wonderland," threatening everyone who crossed her part with an "Off with his head!" or "Off with her head!" Mawanay's detention is even stranger than the decapitation threats: he was ordered detained until he can produce evidence to defend his claims, something he can't do for as long as he is, well, detained.

I won't repeat the dreary details from that eight-hour debacle, brought to us courtesy of our taxes. Instead I want to focus our attention on a terrible affliction that's eroding our body politic: this insane fetish over investigations.

We organize committees and task forces for every problem, every brewing rumor, with the hearings leading nowhere, or worse. Remember that case a few years back when some city government in the Visayas launched an investigation into a passenger ship that had sank? The hearings were conducted in the mezzanine floor of the city hall which, one day, collapsed right in the middle of a hearing (I suspect, from the weight of so many hearings and documents). City officials responded by launching an investigation into the cause of the floor's collapse but I never heard anything again about the results of either investigation—into the ship's sinking or the mezzanine floor's collapse. One of these days we just might hear of an investigation into what's gone wrong with the current Senate investigation.

The fetish over investigations is part of a rather distorted interpretation of due process. We are too quick at hurling accusations at each other but dilly-dally when it comes to formally instituting legal proceedings. In this current case, we've been hearing one accusation after another against Lacson but no charges have been filed with the Ombudsman or our courts. Instead, the Senate steps in and treats us to a bad *comedia*.

Adding insult to injury, these investigative hearings end up violating, rather than upholding, due process. Last Friday's Senate hearing leads me to suspect that our politicians want these investigations because this is their chance to grandstand. We certainly saw that last week, each senator trying to outdo the television soaps with their hysterics. Senator Legarda brimmed over with adjectives—"ridiculous, preposterous, if not amusing"—to describe Mawanay's "fairy tale." Earlier, when Col. Victor Corpus referred to "bad eggs" in the august chamber, a terribly defensive Sen. Rodolfo Biazon demanded names, bellowing something about having to defend his name with his grandson.

It was pathetic, as the heroes of Erap's impeachment hearings were reduced to petty and belligerent politicians. In the end, it was Sen. Aquilino Pimentel, so idolized during the Erap hearings, who played the role of the Queen of Hearts in Alice's Wonderland, proposing that Mawanay be detained. The star witness was promptly dispatched to a detention room in the Senate building's dungeon, oops, I meant basement.

I understand the senators got into the act because this whole scandal started out as accusations against one of their peers, but it is becoming clear that there is too much conflict of interest involved for the Senate to get anywhere. Last Friday, we saw how several senators took on, sometimes simultaneously, the roles of defendant, prosecutor, defense lawyer and even judge.

I have to say something as well about Corpus. I have no doubts about the man's sincerity. He honestly believes in his "crusade" against the threat of the Philippines becoming another Colombia, ruled by drug dealers. But the road to hell is paved with good intentions and the man just doesn't have the sharpness you'd expect of an intelligence chief. (Then of course, who was that American comedian who said that "military intelligence" was a contradiction in terms?) He's naïve and gullible and, worst of all, has a foot-in-mouth disease, too quick to release results of his own crude "investigations" and too slow to present hard evidence. He fumbled with the photograph of Kim Wong and he fumbled again in Friday's hearings, resurrecting old accusations linking Sen. Vicente Sotto III to drug lord Alfredo Tiongco.

Lacson says all this is a demolition job against him but last Friday's biggest loser wasn't Lacson or individual senators, but the Macapagal administration. I'm beginning to believe the rumors going around that these Corpus-Mawanay exposés are part of a Machievellian conspiracy to destroy the credibility of our political institutions. Whoever's behind the plot certainly knows our politicians, playing on their mania for investigations and grandstanding to get them to demolish each other. The sad part is many Filipinos probably feel it's just as well.

* * *

Comments to miguel@pinoykasi.net

Complete MRT, LRT link

TRAFFIC and pollution are two facts of life that people have learned to live with. But this does not have to be so. The MRT, for example, has shown that progress does have clear benefits for us. Not only does it provide a safe and convenient way of commuting for students like me, but it is also a healthy alternative to diesel-powered, smoke-belching buses.

The MRT has also started to make the term "Edsa traffic" obsolete—for those who use this modern facility, that is. During the pre-MRT era, my dad used to bring me to school hours before my classes would start to avoid the Edsa nightmare. Now, with the MRT, my dad and I save precious time. My father no longer has to bring me to school and simply picks me up at the MRT stations.

Still I think that the potential of the MRT has not been fully utilized. I am very lucky that the MRT is linked to the LRT station on Taft near the school where I study. Then again, I find it peculiar that the LRT is not linked to the MRT on the other side. Wouldn't it be better if the MRT and LRT were linked on both sides? Wouldn't it make commuting more efficient?

If the government embarks on this project, it would be a smart investment that would be worth the wait and whatever fleeting inconvenience it may cause.—**LUCIE K. FONACIER, Unit 107 Alexis Condominium, Valle Verde 6, Pasig City**

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China drives out Tibet monks, nuns from institute

BEIJING—Armed police have forced hundreds of Tibetan nuns and monks to leave a Buddhist institute in southwest China before destroying their homes to prevent them from returning, a monitoring group said yesterday.

The expulsions at the Serthar (or Wumin) Institute in Ganzi prefecture of Sichuan province began in June and appeared to be aimed at reducing the population of the institute from around 7,000 monks and nuns to 1,400, the London-based Tibet Information Network said.

The forced removals threaten the survival of Serthar, one of the most important remaining centers of Tibetan Buddhism.

High-level Chinese officials oversaw the demolition of residential quarters, said TIN.

Photographs smuggled out of China show the huts of nuns at Serthar being torn down to prevent them from returning, TIN said, adding more than 1,000 dwellings were destroyed.

Police and local officials demanded the nuns sign documents denouncing the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, promising not to return and pledging to honor the policies laid down by the Chinese authorities.

But many nuns left without signing the statements, TIN said.

"Many of them have fled with nowhere to go," TIN quoted once source saying.

"Some of them were so poor that at Serthar they used to do fasting retreats because they had so little food. Now they are likely to be suffering even more."

Many of those who remained have threatened to commit suicide rather than leave, the report said.

Nearly 1,000 Chinese Buddhist students were also expelled, TIN said.

A government official in Sida county, where the institute is located, confirmed the evictions.

"You can't say we're forcing them to leave. We're just checking and cleaning up the site because they don't meet the guidelines. The institute only allows 1,400 people, but it's got people coming from everywhere," he said.

The officials told the Chinese students the expulsions were necessary due to "poor sanitary conditions," he said.

The authorities had ruled that students from outside Sichuan province would not be allowed to stay at Serthar in the future, a local monk told TIN.

The Serthar monastic complex, founded in 1980 to revive Buddhist scholarship and meditation, housed the largest concentration of monks and nuns in China. In addition to the Tibetans, it also has nearly 1,000 Chinese students. *AFP*

BACK FROM THE MUD

Nurses help an injured miner out of an ambulance in Donetsk, Ukraine, Aug. 19 following a gas explosion at the Zasyadko coal mine in eastern Ukraine which killed 36 miners.

REUTERS

CIA fed military info to Croatia–Newsweek

WASHINGTON—The US Central Intelligence Agency provided sensitive military intelligence to the Croatian military to prepare it for a 1995 offensive to push Serb troops out of the border region of Krajina, Newsweek magazine reported.

Operating out of a secluded military base on Croatia's Adriatic coast, US intelligence experts were sending pilotless drones to photograph Serb troop positions and weapons emplacements in Krajina, the report in the weekly's Monday edition said.

The images were then shared with Croatian General Ante Gotovina in command of "Operation Storm" and proved vital for the success of the campaign.

Thanks to US intelligence, Gotovina was able to concentrate his troops at the point of a planned Serb counterattack and thwart it.

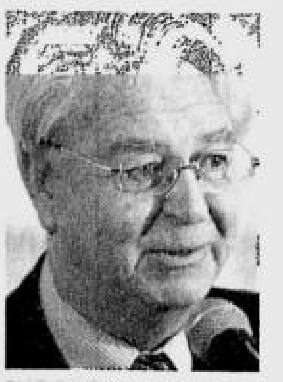
According to Miro Tudjman, son of the late president Franjo Tudjman, who served as head of the Croatian intelligence service in the mid-1990s, the United States also provided encryption gear to each of Croatia's regular Army brigades, Newsweek said.

The CIA also spent at least $10 million on Croatian listening posts to intercept telephone calls in Bosnia and Serbia, according to the report.

Ironically, all these secrets may now become public because Gotovina, 45, was indicted by the UN war-crimes tribunal in The Hague last month for atrocities committed during and after "Operation Storm."

The general has refused to surrender himself to the tribunal, but his lawyer has said he intends to use US intelligence to defend his client, Newsweek reported. *AFP*

S. African anti-apartheid editor Donald Woods dies



WOODS

LONDON—Donald Woods, a veteran South African newspaper editor and apartheid opponent whose activism was chronicled in the movie "Cry Freedom," has died following a long battle with cancer. He was 67.

Woods was the founder and editor of the Daily Dispatch newspaper in South Africa. His opposition to apartheid angered authorities and eventually forced him into exile.

He was a close friend of Steve Biko, a leader of South Africa's Black Consciousness movement who died in detention after being tortured by apartheid-era security police. The 1987 Richard Attenborough film "Cry Freedom" centered on the journalist's relationship with Biko. American actor Kevin Kline played Woods.

Daily Dispatch staff and family members said Woods died Sunday at the Royal Marsden hospital in Sutton, just south of London.

His eldest daughter, Jane, said inoperable cancer had been found in his liver three weeks ago. A previous bout of cancer two years ago led to the removal of a lung and kidney.

Woods edited the Daily Dispatch from 1965 until 1977, when he was placed under effective house arrest. He escaped in 1978 by disguising himself as a priest and slipping past police guarding his home.

Woods fled to Britain, where he waged a campaign for South African democracy through lecture tours and news articles.

South Africa's High Commissioner in London, Cheryl Carolus, described Woods on Sunday as a "truly great son of South Africa."

"A great life of courage has ended but his spirit lives on with his people," she said.

In 1978, Woods became the first private citizen invited to address the UN Security Council. He also served as a consultant on South Africa to the European Union and the Commonwealth of Britain and its former colonies.

He returned to South Africa in 1990 after 13 years in exile, but continued to live in Britain. He later made several visits to his homeland, the last in May for the wedding of Biko's son, Nkosinathi.

Woods was honored last year by Queen Elizabeth II for his human rights work. Up until his death, he had been working on a project to erect a statue of Nelson Mandela in London's Trafalgar Square, a popular spot for anti-apartheid protests because it neighbored the South African High Commission. *AP*

Over 3,000 Taiwan factories close shop

TAIPEI—Over 3,300 Taiwanese factories closed in the seven months to July, up 39 percent from a year earlier, as the economy turned sharply for the worse, the economic ministry said yesterday.

"The current recession has forced many Taiwanese manufacturers either out of business or to shift their facilities to the mainland for cheaper labor and land costs," a ministry official said.

The official said the actual number of factories closing, mostly in the traditional manufacturing sector, was greater than official statistics revealed because many firms had not registered with the government.

Battered by the prolonged global downturn, Taiwan's economic growth in the second quarter to June suffered its biggest quarterly fall for 26 years of 2.35 percent, the Directorate General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics (DGBAS) said Friday.

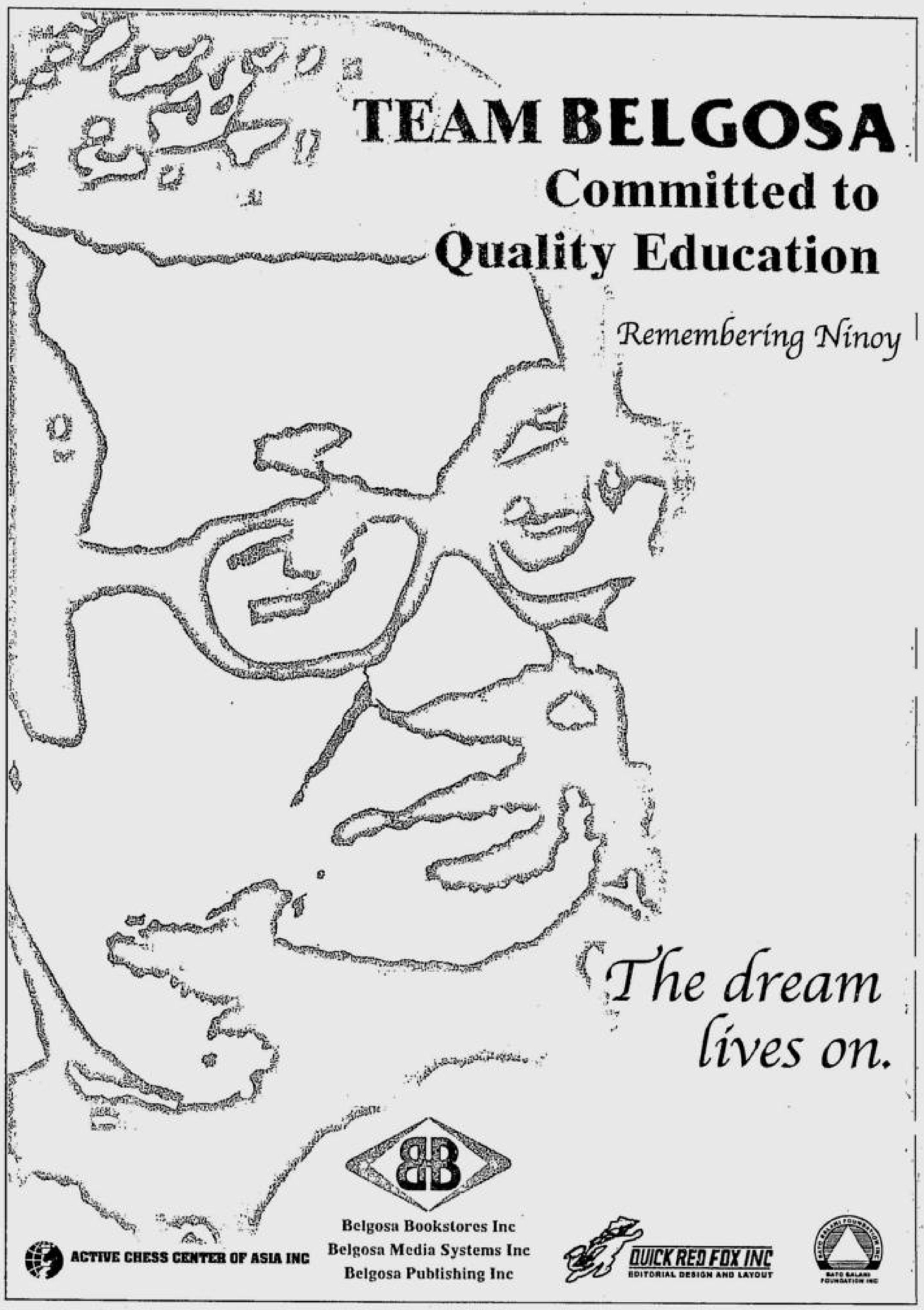
The economy is also expected to contract for the first time ever over the full year by 0.37 percent, sharply down from the DGBAS' earlier estimate of 4.02 percent growth.

Meanwhile, the number of newly registered plants in the January-July period fell 30 percent to 2,326 from a year earlier, the ministry said.

Some 5,000 factories were shut down in Taiwan last year, forcing more than 100,000 people out of work.

Local media reports have said the number of closures this year could top 6,000.

China-bound investment in the six months rose 23.5 percent year-on-year to $1.36 billion as the domestic investment climate worsened, the investment commission said. *AFP*



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Nazis collected best musical instruments

CHICAGO—During the Holocaust, the Nazis targeted top-quality violins in a secret operation to seize Europe's best musical instruments, according to a report published Sunday.

The looted violins included dozens of priceless Stradivari, Guarneri and Amati, the Chicago Tribune reported Sunday, and the instruments could be the next area of inquiry by those seeking reparations for Holocaust-era losses.

The report was compiled using recently declassified US military war records, captured German documents, post-Holocaust claims at the National Archives and several other overseas documents.

Adolf Hitler's chief ideologue, Alfred Rosenberg, created a Special Task Force for Music, or Sonderstab Musik, in 1940 to collect the best musical instruments and scores. The campaign ran for five years.

According to German documents, musicologists followed the Nazis as they invaded Europe, and carefully evaluated, cataloged and prepared the instruments and other musical items for transport to the Music Office in Berlin.

"This is right now in the earliest phase of our work, but it may be one of the most fascinating areas of exploration," said Elan Steinberg, executive director of the World Jewish Congress, which has been at the forefront of negotiations regarding Holocaust-era robberies.

Attempts to win back the rare stolen instruments or gain appropriate compensation could face obstacles:

- Museums have been slow to identify works procured under questionable circumstances during or soon after WWII, the Tribune reported. (However, in recent years art museums from Chicago to Berlin have created websites detailing the history of works that may have been looted during the Holocaust.)
- Violins are more difficult to identify than works of art, which have titles, dates and subjects. An owner will be hard-pressed to definitively identify any missing violin.
- Holocaust survivors were unable to preserve documentation needed to identify and prove ownership of a rare instrument, such as a bill of sale or certificate of authenticity.
- The details of the Nazis' thefts of antique violins have been buried in classified documents for decades.

Today, victims who lost their instruments only have memories of the treasured violins.

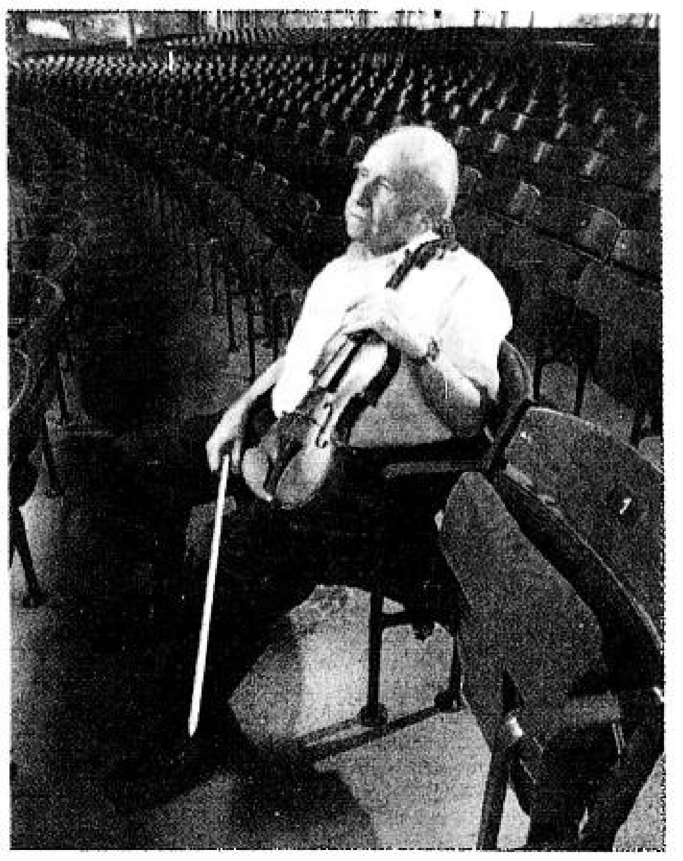
"I used to play a wonderful Italian Gagliano violin," said Chicago Symphony Orchestra violinist Francis Akos, who in 1939 won use of the fiddle as first prize in a violin competition in Budapest, Hungary.

With the outbreak of WWII, Akos, who is Jewish, was forced to do manual labor in the Hungarian Army and later was sent to a Nazi concentration camp. He never again saw his centuries-old Italian Gagliano.

After the war, losing the instrument symbolized a greater loss for Akos.

"When I came back from the concentration camp, I tried to find my friends," said Akos, 79, referring to the benefactors who had provided him with the Gagliano.

"They weren't around anymore. None of them survived the war. And their instruments disappeared somewhere, too. Everything was gone." *AP*



CHICAGO Symphony Orchestra violinist Francis Akos waits for rehearsal to begin at Ravinia in Chicago, Aug. 2, as he holds his GB Guadagnini violin. Akos, who is Jewish, was forced to do manual labor in the Hungarian Army and later was sent to a Nazi concentration camp during World War II and never again saw his centuries-old Italian Gagliano. AP

Kim orders probe of Seoul aviation after black mark

SEOUL—South Korea's transport minister faced intense pressure to resign yesterday as the country's two airlines counted their losses following a US cut in South Korea's air safety rating.

The opposition Grand National Party (GNP) demanded the dismissal of Construction and Transportation Minister Oh Jang-seop for mismanagement.

President Kim Dae-jung rejected the demand but ordered an investigation into South Korea's aviation industry, officials said.

"A thorough probe is needed before having someone take responsibility," presidential spokesperson Park Joon-young said, adding state auditors should first look into the case.

The transport minister made a public apology after the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) cut South Korea's air safety rating from Category I to Category II.

The cut means Korean Air Lines Co. (KAL) and Asiana Airlines cannot expand current services to the United States nor carry out cooperation agreements with US carriers.

American Airlines has told Asiana it would scrap a code sharing arrangement, which had allowed Asiana to fly passengers to Chicago and six other US cities.

Asiana said it would lose $16 million in revenue.

Delta Airlines has also canceled plans to restore a joint seat marketing arrangement with KAL. The US company halted the arrangement after the 1997 crash of a Korean Air passenger jet in Guam but hoped to restore it this year. *AFP*

Concern grows as US shark victims mount

WASHINGTON—Horrors borrowed from the movie "Jaws" befell three US beachgoers attacked by sharks Sunday, prompting marine biologists to search for answers to the ocean predators' aggressive behavior.

The latest attacks off New Smyrna Beach on Florida's Atlantic coast brought to six the number of people mauled by sharks in the Sunshine State just over this past weekend.

The victims were taking part in a traditional surfing contest near the Ponce Inlet, which this year brought together about 120 competitors, according to local officials.

The surfers apparently rode their boards into a migrating school of sharks, which did not hesitate to punish the three intruders by taking a bite out of their calves and feet.

None of the injuries were life threatening, according to hospital officials.

Three other participants at the surfing competition suffered minor shark bites Saturday.

Shark attacks have been making headlines in the United States since July 6, when eight-year-old Jessie Arbogast was attacked by a bull shark in knee-deep water of the Gulf of Mexico in Pensacola, Florida.

With his right arm bitten off, Jessie lost almost all of his blood and remains in a light coma due to brain damage.

Two Americans were attacked by sharks on the Bahamas this month, with New York investment banker Krishna Thompson losing his leg in one of these the incidents.

"It's very unusual," commented New Smyrna Beach deputy police chief Joe Wooden. "Suddenly, for some reason, the sharks are biting down on people."

And, as if in a display of newly-found boldness, hundreds of sharks converged in shallow waters off Tampa and Sarasota, Florida, last week—sending chills down the spine of millions of television viewers.

The latest statistics indicate shark attack were indeed on the rise worldwide.

According to data compiled by the University of Florida, there were 79 confirmed cases of unprovoked shark attack on humans last year, up from 58 in 1999 and the yearly average of 54 in the 1990s. *AFP*

Forest fires in western US diminish

A FIREFIGHTING crew from Salem, Oregon, mops up hot spots on the Fern Boneyard portion of the Monument Complex fire in Monument, Ore., Aug. 19. AP

LOS ANGELES—Forest fires ravaging western US states retreated somewhat Sunday thanks to lower temperatures and higher humidity, but several areas continued to pose a problem, officials said.

A total of about 154,000 hectares of forest were ablaze in seven Western states and Texas, according to the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho.

Eleven new large fires were reported overnight, three in California, three in Utah, two in Idaho, and one each in Texas, Washington and Wyoming, the center said.

More than 27,100 firefighters are assigned to wildland fires.

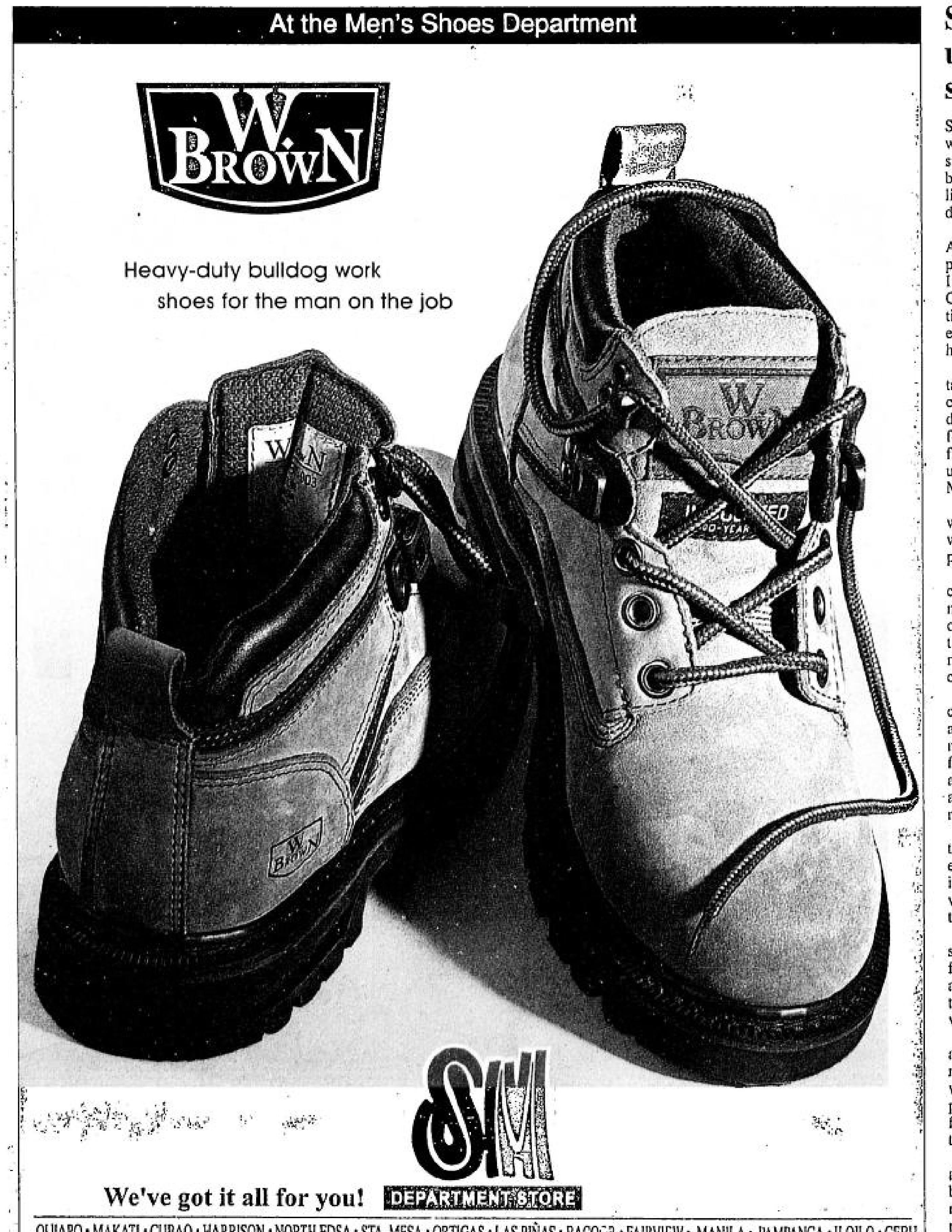
"The situation in the Pacific Northwest appears to be slightly improved, due to cooler weather," the center said in a statement.

Some fires exhibited active fire behavior, but firefighters were able to make good progress on others, officials added.

Evacuations, both mandatory and voluntary, were still in place on some of the Washington state fires.

Military personnel have been rushed to the area to help the firefighters, but fire center spokesperson Davida Carnahan said they were unlikely to see any action until later in the week.

"The military personal will begin training on Tuesday and will receive 40 hours of training before going to the fires on Thursday," she said. *AFP*



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Strippers underpaid, says union

SYDNEY—Women who work as tabletop strippers in Australia are being ripped off, a fledgling union said yesterday.

Striptease Artists Australia, which has applied to the Australian Industrial Relations Commission for registration, said tabletop dancers work for up to 12 hours for as little as $17.

Clubs forced their tabletop dancers to solicit customers for private dances for which the performer received only a fraction of the payment, union spokesperson Mystical Melody said.

Ultimately, women with no stable income were being forced into prostitution.

Melody made her claims when she announced the union was opposing plans for a tabletop dancing/gentlemen's club in Maroochydore, Queensland.

"The general public, city and local councils and government departments are unaware of the fact that the performers are not being paid nor are they employed correctly," Melody said.

She said clubs advertised for women with no experience to dance, giving the impression they would make plenty of tax-free money.

"But the reality of the situation is that the performer must solicit amongst the patrons to try to sell themselves for private dances," Melody said.

"These private dances are performed in closed rooms and the performer will only receive a small portion of the price paid for the entertainment by the patron."

The clubs encouraged as many women as possible to work because they made more money from performers than from bar and door takings. *AFP*

Israel blockade strangles farms

SIEFA, Gaza Strip—Shefik Hassuna buried his orange crop in the sand, just as thousands of other Palestinian peasants have been forced to do as the Jewish state strangles their economy.

The issue of farm trade was high on the agenda for Palestinian and Israeli farm ministers in Tel Aviv on Sunday.

From the Gaza Strip, which before the intifada exported 30 percent of its agricultural output, goods exit on a drip-feed basis.

In the tiny land cordoned off by barbed wire, with comings and goings monitored permanently by the Israeli Army, the security requirements demanded by Israel result in the cruel reality of closed transit points, delays, increased transport costs—all brought on by Israel.

In Siefa, to the north, 4,000 sq. m. of 30-year-old lemon groves and orange trees look seaward: the sole source of revenue for Shefik, who is father to 14 children.

Prior to the uprising, this farmer from generations back sold two thirds of his produce in the West Bank.

"Right from the start (of the intifada), the exporter told me it no longer made sense to export the produce," said Shefik. So he lets his output simply overspill and just buries the surplus.

"I wear myself out throughout the year only to see the fruit of my labor swallowed up in an hour," he sighs, saying he has lost some 80 percent of his income. Worn down by debt, he no longer can pay his bills.

"How can I foot the bill for the return to school?" he says.

And he says there is worse to come.

"I live from day to day, but I know that tomorrow will be worse," he says, displaying worrisome brown stains on the lemons—"I do not have money for pesticides," he says.

In Gaza, around a quarter of the population of some 1.2 million people live off the land—most small farmers caring for minor plots and low-scale arable allotments—while the agriculture ministry says there are some 10,000 agricultural employees working the land.

Nothing is being exported; they still have to deal with the constant Army blockade of the internal road system. In the south, right at the heart of Gaza, produce has no chance of making it to the north, and therefore it just perishes—let alone the farms stripped bare, trees uprooted, wells and other elements just destroyed by the Israelis. *AFP*

Mideast peace for painting, thief demands

NEW YORK—A letter received by New York's Jewish Museum has set peace in the Middle East as the price for the return of a stolen Marc Chagall painting, The New York Times reported yesterday.

The museum has received a letter from someone claiming to be involved in the theft two months ago of Chagall's "Study for 'Over Vitebsk,'" saying that the painting would not be returned until peace has been achieved between Israel and the Palestinians.

The incident appears to be a case of art being stolen for political ends, said the daily, quoting museum and law enforcement officials.

Investigators told the newspaper they were convinced that the June 12 ransom letter, signed by a previously unknown group calling itself the "International Committee for Art and Peace," had indeed come from a person or persons involved in the heist.

"Our investigation to date supports that whoever sent this letter has knowledge about the whereabouts of the painting," one investigator said.

Officials told the daily they could not tell whether the letter writer's sympathies lay with the Palestinians or Israel.

The 1914 oil painting on canvas was stolen from the Jewish Museum sometime between the start of a June 7 cocktail reception and the next morning, when it was discovered missing.

The painting, depicting a peddler with a sack on his back floating above a village, is valued at $1 million, according to the Times. The work was on loan to the museum from a private collection in Russia. *AFP*

Probe: Malaysia cops guilty of rights abuses

KUALA LUMPUR—Malaysia's police were guilty of violating human rights and "cruel and inhuman" treatment of detainees after a mass anti-government protest last November, a top-level inquiry found yesterday.

The government-backed Human Rights Commission of Malaysia, in a 66-page report of its first public inquiry since it was established in April last year, found police used excessive force against protesters.

Water cannon and teargas were brought to bear on some 5,000 supporters of jailed ex-deputy premier Anwar Ibrahim gathered on the Kesas highway near Kuala Lumpur on Nov. 5 and 116 people were detained.

Police had declared a planned rally in support of Anwar illegal and blocked access to the venue, sparking the demonstration led by key opposition leaders including Anwar's wife, Wan Azizah Wan Ismail.

Brutality

Some detainees later complained to the commission—known by its Malay acronym Suhakam—of police brutality and a three-member panel began the inquiry in December.

"The panel is clearly of the view that there were several violations of human rights arising from the Kesas highway incident," the head of the panel, former chief justice Anuar Zainal Abidin, told a press conference.

He cited the use of force on demonstrators, confiscating and causing damage to private property, causing injury to detainees and a delay in providing medical aid to them.

"The agency responsible for the human rights violations is the police," he said.

"The panel finds that the treatment of persons detained was cruel and inhuman."

Anuar blamed the violations on "total denial and domination action," a police term referring to steps taken to gain total control of a situation.

Grilling

The panel said it was "extremely disturbed" that special branch police later gathered security intelligence by questioning detainees on matters unrelated to the alleged offence they were held for.

It voiced concern over "misuse of police bail for an indefinite period" and said those not charged within a month should be released unconditionally.

The panel said it was not an offence to wear a t-shirt bearing a picture of Anwar, and criticized police for detaining a 17-year-old girl for five days on that basis.

It said an attack on a plainclothes police officer at the time was probably "orchestrated to turn an otherwise peaceful gathering into a violent one."

Suhakam echoed recommendations it made earlier this month in a report on "Freedom of Assembly," urging police to allow peaceful assemblies and not to use roadblocks to prevent gatherings.

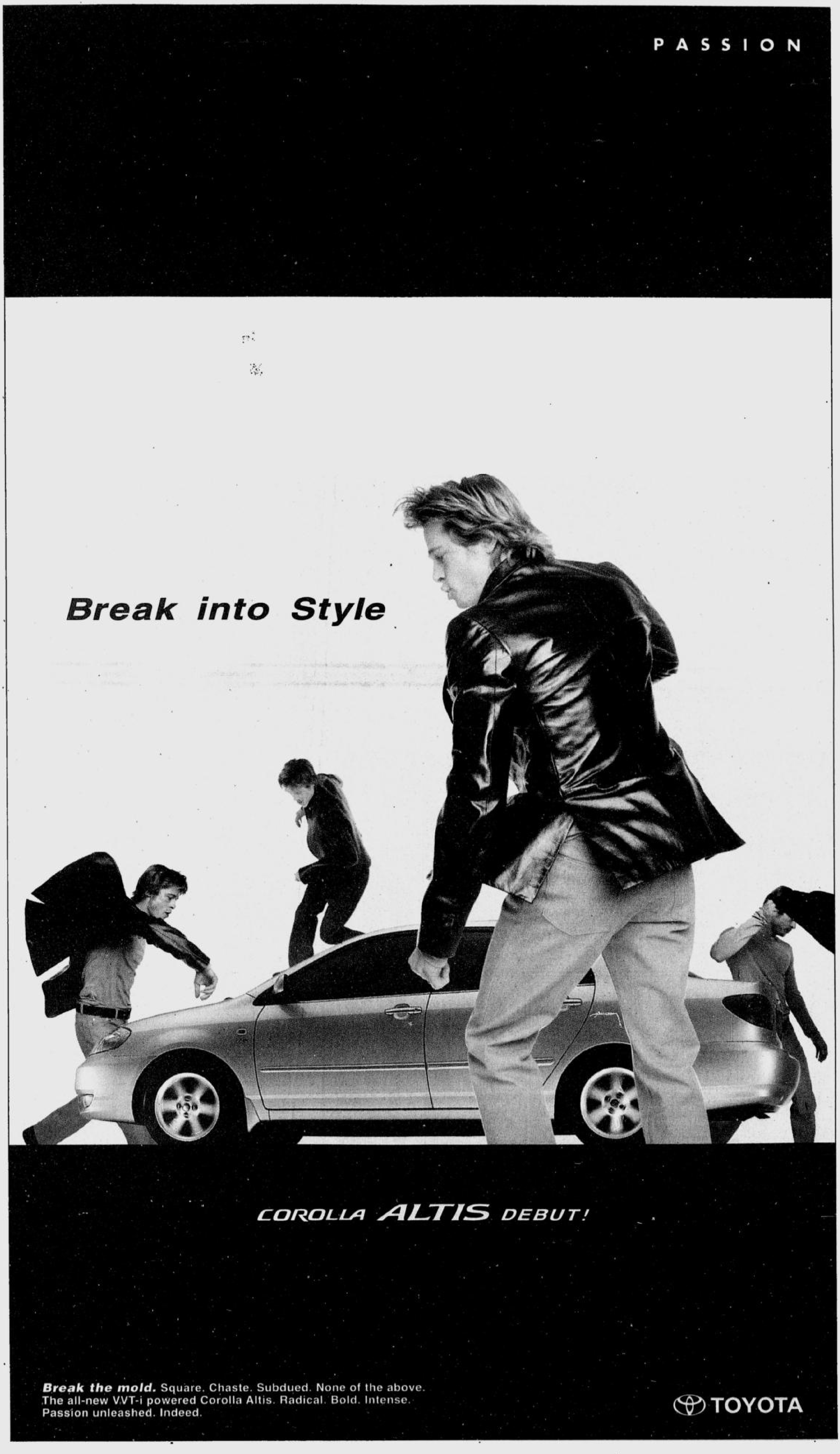
Anuar called on police to review crowd dispersal methods, exercise restraint and not "manhandle" women, halt a practice requiring detainees to strip and squat, and identify and punish officers who had used force.

The report followed interviews with 46 witnesses, including doctors, detainees and police.

"I hope the police will take it in the right spirit," said another panel member Mehrun Siraj.

"We are not targeting them. We are just trying to suggest ways to balance up the rights of the individual and the rights of police in maintaining law and order."

She said the report would be tabled in parliament soon and Suhakam, which has no powers of enforcement, would leave it to the government to implement its recommendations. *AFP*



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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Luzon will experience partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms while the rest of the country will be partly cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.
SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Hi 32° Lo 25°
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Hi 24° Lo 17°
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Hi 33° Lo 21°
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Hi 33° Lo 26°
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Hi 32° Lo 24°
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Hi 26° Lo 24°
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Hi 30° Lo 25°
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Hi 32° Lo 24°
Bacolod	Partly Cloudy	Hi 29° Lo 24°
Roxas	Partly Cloudy	Hi 32° Lo 26°
Cebu	Partly Cloudy	Hi 31° Lo 25°
Tacloban	Partly Cloudy	Hi 35° Lo 27°
Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy	Hi 32° Lo 26°
Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy	Hi 33° Lo 25°
Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy	Hi 31° Lo 24°
Davao	Partly Cloudy	Hi 32° Lo 26°

Compiled by: Ray Leyesa, PDI Research/08/21/01

ROUNDUP

12 nabbed in 'jueteng'

GUBAT, Sorsogon—Joint elements of the Department of the Interior and Local Government Task Force Jericho under Insp. Alfredo Consimino and the Gubat police arrested 15 alleged jueteng bet checkers and collectors in Barangay Bentuco, Gubat recently. Police caught the suspects at the back of a house owned by a certain Leony Lim. Confiscated during the raid were P2,600 in cash and jueteng paraphernalia, police said. The suspects have been charged with violation of anti-gambling laws.

Emir Gamis, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Taxi driver killed

DAVAO CITY—A taxi driver was robbed and killed by two suspects here on Sunday night. The victim was identified as Constancio Mahinay, 50, driver of a Holiday Taxi. Police said Mahinay suffered multiple stab wounds. He was found around 11 p.m. Sunday inside his taxi. Two suspects were reportedly seen running away from the taxi. *Anthony Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Drug couple arrested

DAVAO CITY—A couple were arrested in separate buy-bust operations here Sunday night. Senior Insp. Fulgencio Favo, chief of the Special Operation Response Team of the Davao City Police Office, identified the suspects as Cotsa Jeer, 45, and his wife Bernadeth, 38, residents of Cotabato City. Favo said they seized 150 grams of shabu from the suspects. Bernadeth, who was arrested around 10:15 p.m., allegedly had in her possession 25 grams of shabu. Cotsa, who was arrested in a follow-up operation, allegedly had 125 grams of shabu.

Anthony Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Firms offer ₱5 wage hike

By Nestor Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—A group of employers are offering a P5-increase in the daily minimum wage of workers in the private sector, way below the P50 being pushed by moderate labor groups.

The Iloilo Multi-Sectoral Business Organization Inc. (IMSBOI) also said any increase in the minimum wage should be part of the workers' emergency relief allowance.

"A wage hike is just a stop-gap measure, with no real benefits," the IMSBOI said in a position paper presented during a public consultation conducted by the Regional Tripartite Wage and Productivity Board in Western Visayas (RTWPB-6) yesterday.

The IMSBOI is an umbrella group composed of Iloilo-based retailers, hardware merchants, and operators of hotels, restaurants and resorts.

Lawyer Gil Marie Alba, IMSBOI spokesperson, said more emphasis should be given on increasing productivity, creating jobs, improving the political climate and boosting investor confidence.

Boycott

The Kilusang Mayo Uno, however, boycotted the consultation at the National Economic Development Authority building in this city. Its members instead held a rally in front of the venue to demand a P125 increase through legislation.

A handful of members of the Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino and the Sanlakas, carrying flags and shouting slogans, tried to force their way into the building.

Security guards blocked the building's entrance and only allowed leaders of the groups to enter.

Reacting to the IMSBOI's proposal, Aurelio Bosque, KMU-Panay spokesperson, said: "One-way *nga pamasahe lang* (The amount is only good for a one-way fare in jeepneys.)"

"Since its creation, the wage boards have been useless (as a tool) to protect the rights and dignity of workers. In fact, it has been a willing instrument of employers to peg our wages to the lowest level," said Bosque.

At present, the minimum daily wage in Western Visayas is pegged at P170 per day after the wage board ordered a P10 increase in daily wages last November.

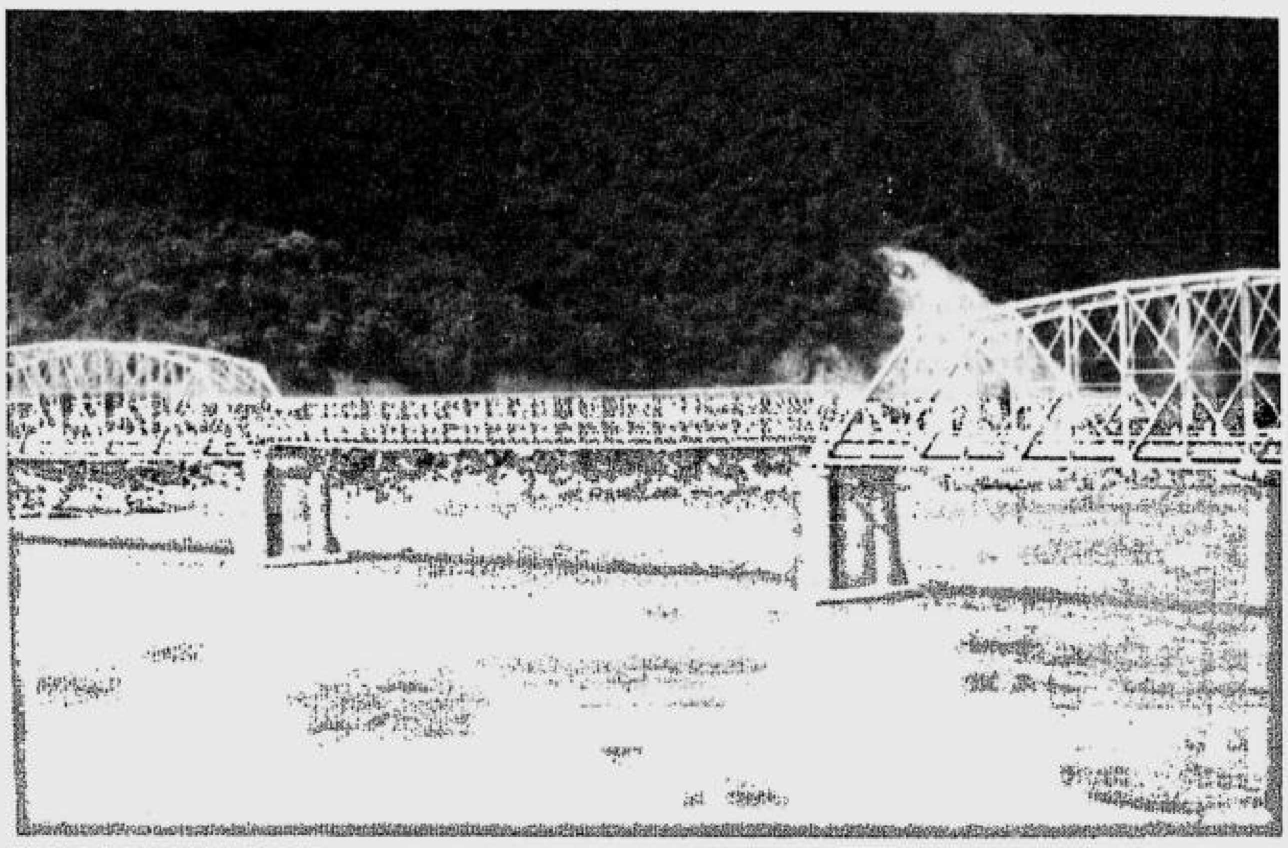
The wage board has issued 12 wage orders raising the daily wage rates in the region from P89 to the present P170 since it was formed in 1989.

Three Negros Occidental-based labor organizations affiliated with the moderate Trade Union Congress of the Philippines have filed a petition for a P50 increase in the minimum wage for around 2.35 million workers in the private sector in the region.

The KMU and other militant labor groups did not file any petition for an increase before the regional wage board. Instead, they demanded a legislated wage increase of P125 daily.

Yesterday's consultation is the second of a series scheduled by the wage board in the region.

Last Aug. 9, the wage board met with representatives of labor and employers' organizations in Capiz. Similar meetings will be held in Bacolod City, Negros Occidental today; Kalibo town, Aklan on Aug. 29; Boracay Island, Aklan on Aug. 30; and in San Jose town, Antique on Sep. 9.



TEMPORARY RELIEF LEONCIO BALBIN JR.

A bailey bridge replaces a 50-km span of the Quirino Bridge in Ilocos Sur which was washed away recently by Typhoon Feria, easing a bit the difficulty of travelling in the province.

More girls to file raps vs American

BACOLOD CITY—More minors are coming out in the open to file rape charges against a retired American serviceman who is now detained for raping a 15-year-old girl.

Evangeline Laguardia, Commission on Human Rights special investigator, said additional rape charges will be filed against Victor Pearson after six girls, ages 13 to 16, had admitted that they, too, were molested by the American.

She said the girls told investigators that the American took videotapes and pictures while they were having sex with him.

They were also made to dance before the camera, Laguardia said.

"If the minors were shy, he made them smoke marijuana and drink tequila (before they were made to perform)," she said.

Pearson, 53 and married to a Negrense, is detained at the Ilog municipal jail after Carina (not her real name), 15, filed rape charges against him before the Municipal Circuit Trial Court in Ilog, 106 kilometers southwest of this city.

Carina and the six girls are now placed in a safehouse under the custody of the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

The police collared the American on Thursday in his residence in Barangay Andolawan, Ilog on the strength of an arrest warrant issued by MCTC Judge Victor Magahud. He denied raping Carina. His wife, Celia Pido, also denied any knowledge of the crime.

Seized from Pearson's house were a 12-gauge homemade shotgun with six bullets, two .38 cal. revolvers with 19 bullets and two small packs of suspected dried marijuana leaves.

Laguardia said they recovered many pictures, 52 VHS tapes, a Betamax tape and 38 Handycam tapes.

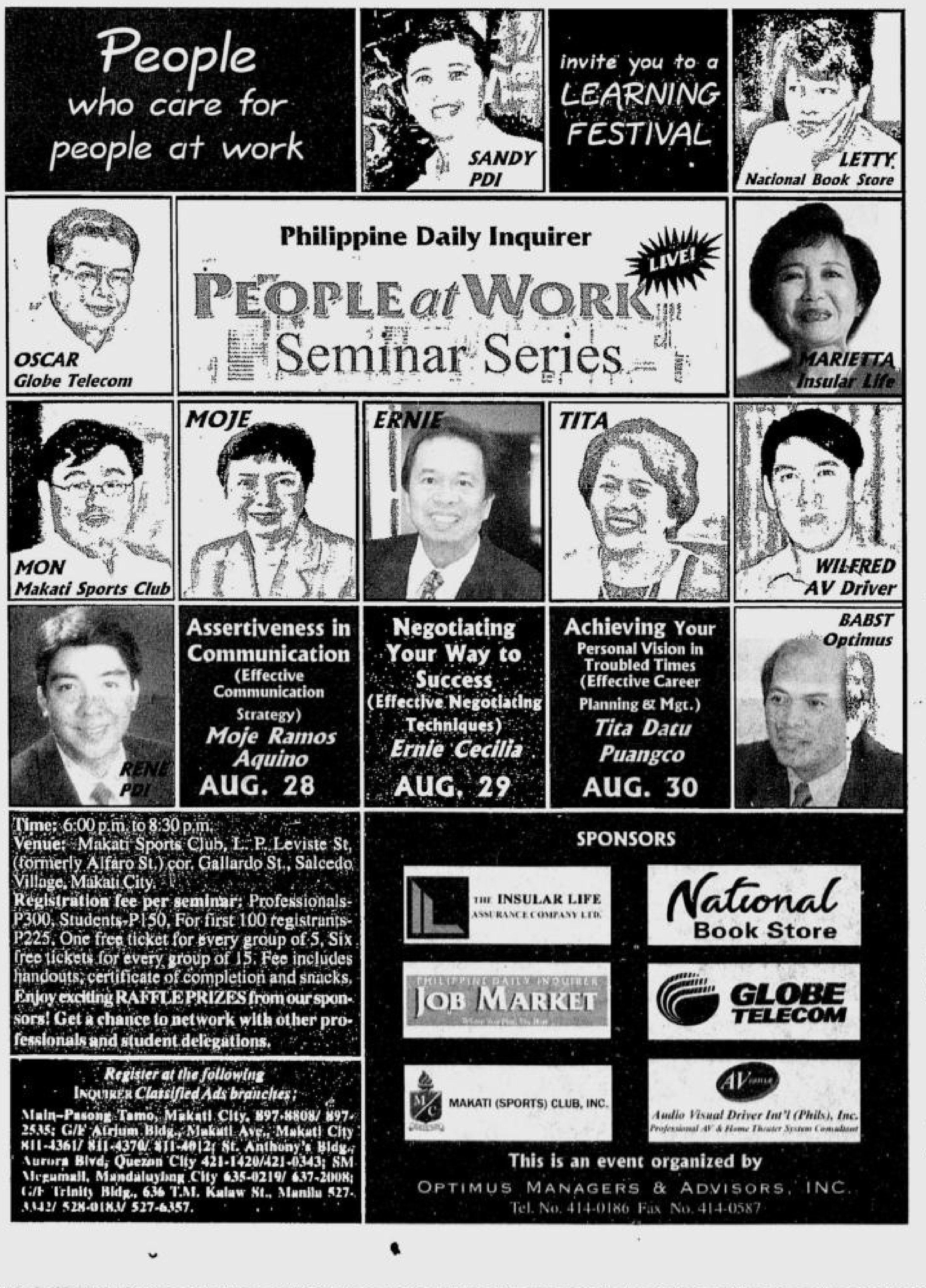
A town official and some prominent persons in southern Negros Occidental were reportedly in some of the photos with the nude minors.

Laguardia said the girls told them that Pearson had warned these persons that he would expose their incriminating photos and videotapes if they tipped off authorities on what he was doing.

Pearson also told the minors not to report to the police or he would have their families killed, she said.

Aside from the six minors, Laguardia said they have a list of 18 girls, some of who are adults, who had sex with Pearson in his residence.

Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau



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301 firms in Davao shut down

DAVAO CITY—At least 301 firms have closed shop after the first half of this year owing to rising operating costs and increasing competition because of trade liberalization.

Manuel Roldan, regional director of the Department of Labor and Employment, expressed disbelief when he found that the figure is about double the number of companies that shut down compared to the same period last year.

From January to July last year, 159 firms stopped operating.

"This is shocking," Roldan told newsmen.

Of the number of establishments that have closed shop, 57 percent are in the agriculture industry, 28.7 percent are in services while 13.6 percent are in manufacturing.

Displaced by the shutdown were 2,890 workers.

Roldan said compared with last year's figures of 3,743 jobs lost, the number of displaced workers this year is small.

"That's because the firms that closed shops are much smaller this year," he said.

Although admitting that the unstable peace and order condition in some areas could also be blamed, Roldan said the main culprit for the closure of the businesses could be liberalization itself.

Philippine businesses, he said, cannot expect to compete with those from other countries which are implementing subsidy programs to help struggling industries. *Joel Escovilla, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Hospital incinerator dumped in RP, says US-based engineer

By Ma. Diosa Labiste
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—A Filipino-American chemical engineer, who evaluates incinerators in the United States, said the Austrian-made incinerator at the Western Visayas Medical Center (WVMC) here is a "second hand reject."

Dr. Jorge Emmanuel said the Austrian government is doing the Philippines a disservice by exporting its incinerators that are being phased out in Austria.

Emmanuel said the incinerator at the state-run WVMC is an earlier and cruder model, which does not have any anti-pollution device to control its emissions of ash and other hazardous chemicals and substances.

He said similar types of incinerators had been shut down in the United States for failing to meet pollution standards.

"I get emotional because I don't want First World countries to dump their obsolescent technology to Third World countries, and in the province of my parents," said Emmanuel in a forum on incinerators held last Aug. 17.

Greenpeace forum

The forum was sponsored by Greenpeace Southeast Asia and the Iloilo-based newspaper, The Visayas Examiner.

Emmanuel, who traces his roots to Igbaras town and Jaro District in this city, is an environmental consultant of the US-based Health Care Without Harm, which promotes ecological medical waste management.

Emmanuel and five representatives of Greenpeace visited the WVMC incinerator shortly before the forum.

Von Hernandez, campaigns director of Greenpeace for Southeast Asia, said the facility at the WVMC is one of the 25 units sold to the Philippine government by the Austrian government. These incinerators were later distributed to state-run hospitals by the Department of Health.

But Hernandez said these units have already been phased out in Austria because they failed that country's emission tests.

Complaints

In June, the WVMC incinerator was a subject of the complaints of some 50 residents here because it gave off noxious odor and thick smoke.

Diana Magbanua, an employee of the WVMC whose house is some 10 meters away from the incinerator, had complained that her family of six suffered various respiratory ailments since the facility started operating in 1998.

The hospital temporarily stopped the incinerator's operation in July and had the facility fenced.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) only conducted a "visual investigation" of the incinerators.

Virginio Fabronero of the DENR's Environmental Management Bureau (EMB), said his office is not capable of testing the incinerator for pollutants such as dioxins and heavy metals.

Hernandez, however, warned that dioxins are proven carcinogens and have been linked to various reproductive disorders such as birth defects, high infant mortality and deficiencies in the immune system.

Dioxins

Dioxins are given off when, among others, chlorinated plastics are burned. Burning also sets free toxic heavy metals like cadmium, mercury and lead present in many hospital waste products.

Emmanuel said there are alternatives to incineration but these should be considered in the context of sound solid waste management.

He said the actual infectious component of many hospitals is less than 10 percent of the hospital's daily waste.

The greater part of the waste, which consists of cafeteria waste, office waste, among others, can be managed through separation, recycling and composting and not through burning, he added.

A TIME TO BUILD

"There is an appointed time for everything,
and a time for every affair under the heavens." (Eccl.3.1)

This is a crucial time in the life of our nation.
Our country remains in political, economic, and spiritual crisis.
Sinister forces seek to disunite our people, pitting the poor against the rich,
the right against the left, Muslims against Christians.
Politicians continue their self-serving posturing and grandstanding.
There is social injustice evidenced by massive poverty and oppression of the poor.
The very life of our nation is under threat from the ravages of illegal drugs, gambling, kidnapping, and plunder.

But the situation is not hopeless, and we are not helpless.
Our nation can survive and even thrive.
But we need to take hold of our destiny. And the time is now.

We need to look not to politicians just concerned about the next election,
but to statesmen who are concerned about the next generation.
Such a one is our national hero **Ninoy Aquino.**
Ninoy was selfless.
Ninoy had a deep love for country.
Ninoy was willing to give his life for the cause of freedom and truth and justice.

And he did. He was martyrd by the same type of sinister forces which threaten our nation today.

We call on all Filipinos to follow in the footsteps of Ninoy.
Let us no longer think only of our own personal good,
but the greater good of our people especially the well-being of the poor.
Let us manifest a deep love for our country, vigorously opposing crime and corruption.
Let us expend our time and energy for the cause of nation-building,
even to the extent of sacrificing our very lives.

Concretely:

1) Now is the time to support our present constitutional government.

- We call on the opposition not to be obstructionists, but join hands with the administration for the good of the people.
- We call on all government officials to serve with hard work and integrity.
- We call on everyone to be vigilant against corruption without being irresponsible and careless.

2) Now is the time to individually make a sacrifice and be generous in giving our time and talent for the sake of this country.

- We call on doctors, dentists, and nurses to devote one day a month to giving free medical treatment to the poor.
- We call on lawyers to give one day a month to volunteer free legal services to the poor who are imprisoned and for those who have pending court cases and do not have the means to defend themselves.
- We call on architects, engineers, and artisans to design and build beautiful homes and clean communities with parks, playgrounds, and other amenities to restore the dignity of the poor.
- We call on entrepreneurs, businessmen, and other professionals to stimulate productivity from the bottom by sharing their skills and expertise with the uneducated and the unskilled.
- We call on schools to share their excellence in education by building facilities in the heart of the depressed areas to make available low-cost, quality, value based education to the poor who cannot afford their tuition or even have the transportation to get to their existing schools. If you cannot bring the poor to Ateneo and La Salle, bring Ateneo and La Salle to Payatas, Bagong Silang, and other slum areas in the country.
- We call on self-sufficient landowners especially in urban areas whose properties are settled by squatters for more than 20 years to donate or sell to them the land at nominal cost and initiate on-site development to restore dignity, confidence, and productivity among its residents.
- We call on all Filipinos to make excellent world-class products and to buy Filipino products.
- We call on all Filipino tourists, before spending their dollars on trips abroad, to tour the Philippines and see the beauty of our country and perk up the local economy.
- We call on highly skilled and well-trained professionals and artisans who are planning to leave the country out of frustration—please stay, and let us give ourselves another chance to rebuild this country.

There is "a time to tear down, and a time to build."(Eccl. 3:3b). We have been tearing down for a long time. Enough!

The time to build has come.
Let us build our nation together.
Our goal: One nation under God that will be a light to the world.

"Build up, build up, prepare the way, remove the stumbling blocks from my people's path." (Isaiah 57:14)

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Senate blinks, frees Ador

(From page A1)

ensure his attendance at the next hearing."

Barbers said the three Senate committees had agreed to give in to Mawanay's request for an opportunity to prove his allegation against Legarda.

"We are giving him the chance to present documents, evidence" to back his allegation, Barbers said.

On Friday, the senators said Mawanay would be kept in detention until he had produced his evidence.

Escape

Mawanay left his detention quarters earlier at 2:10 p.m., throwing Senate security personnel into frenzy.

He returned about two hours later, explaining that he left after somebody called him to say that his release order had already been approved by the Senate.

Drilon said he had asked Senate Sergeant-at-Arms Leonardo Lopez to resign pending the submission of a report on Mawanay's escape.

He said the issue of "negligence" was being considered. "I will not hesitate to recommend to the committee any appropriate action, including possible citation for contempt, should there be basis for that," he added.

According to Lopez, Mawanay casually walked out of his detention quarters and into the parking area of the Senate, accompanied by about four Isafp men and anti-crime advocate Dante Jimenez.

A convoy of three vehicles was said to have led Mawanay out, but Senate Secretary Oscar Yabes said Isafp men on board two trucks took the ex-agent out of the Senate premises.

Mawanay himself said that nobody took him away, and that the decision to leave was his alone.

"I take full responsibility for what happened," said the alleged ex-agent of the defunct Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force.

He apologized to Drilon, Lopez and his Senate guards, and said he wanted to go to Mandaluyong City to seek spiritual guidance from Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin.

But Sen. Rodolfo Biazon said Mawanay's "walkout, escape or abduction" was "a direct challenge to the authority of the Senate."

Unfair

Earlier yesterday, militant groups called on the Senate to immediately release Mawanay.

"The detention of Mawanay is unfair not only to him and his family but also to the public who is eagerly awaiting other information that he may give," the Labor Solidarity Movement (LSM) said in a statement.

It said Mawanay's grilling at the hearing and his subsequent detention showed the senators' high-handedness and lack of political maturity.

It also said the senators should go beyond personal interest by "focus(ing) on the real issue," the allegations made by Corpus against Lacson.

Rodolfo Sambajon, chair of the fisherfolk group Pamalakaya, assailed the Senate blue ribbon, public order and national defense committees.

"The Old Boys Club found itself grilling the star witness who was supposed to aid the Senate in ferreting out the truth," Sambajon said.

Admonition

On Sunday in Lucena City, Sen. Manuel Villar said he was against Mawanay's continued detention.

"I would prefer that we just give Ador an admonition," Villar told the INQUIRER during the Quezon Day celebration where he was guest speaker.

Villar also said the Senate should not totally discard the information provided by Mawanay.

"Assuming that only 10 percent of Ador's information is true, then by all means let us hear it," Villar said. "Who knows, that 10 percent might be enough to establish the guilt of a person."

Villar described what happened at the Senate on Friday as "*nagkabiglaan lang*."

"They were all taken by surprise by Ador's revelations," he said.

But Villar said it was good that "all are coming out." He said he was also afraid of the possibility that the country would become another "narco-state."

"This we should not let happen. We should not stop in ferreting out the truth. But we should be careful of our judgment not only on Ador but also on everybody else," Villar said. ***With reports from Gerald G. Lacuarta in Manila; Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

Nene blames propagandists, as John O. admits folly

(From page A1)

bought 1,000 pieces of smuggled cellphones and sought his release so that "the proceedings of the committees (can) move forward."

"I will transfer the venue of my complaint against Mr. Mawanay to the courts of justice in order to seek vindication," she said.

Blind eye

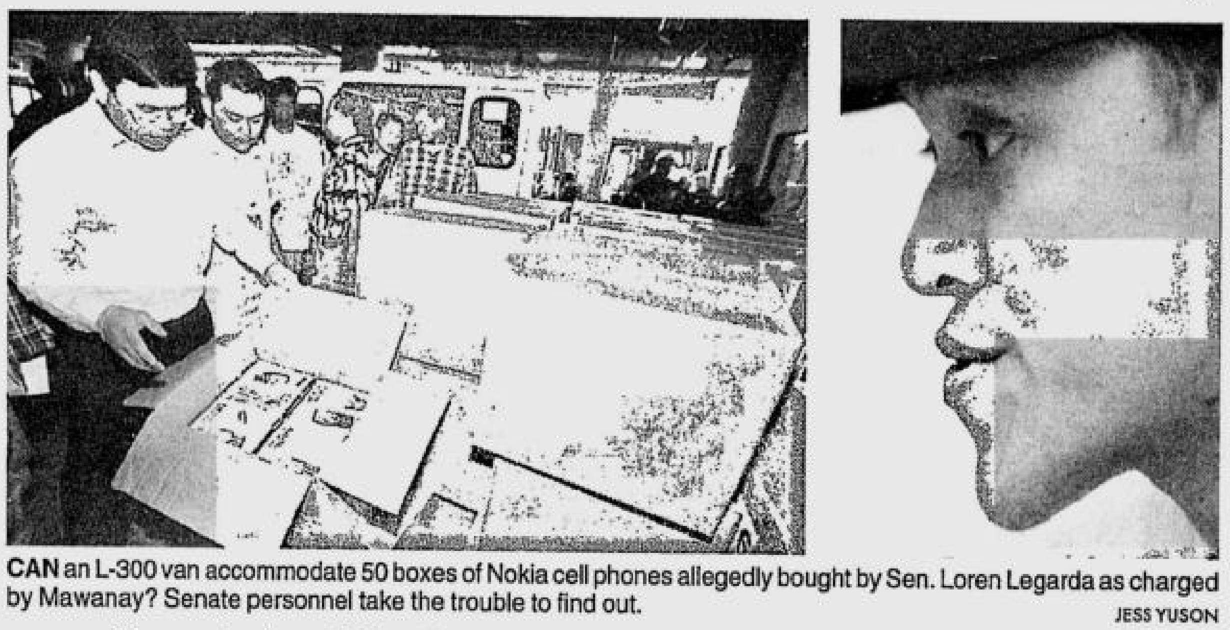
In his privilege speech, Pimentel said Corpus' superiors seemed to have turned a blind eye to the way the chief of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines carried out his investigations. At the Aug.17 hearing, Corpus had openly admitted he had incomplete intelligence data on the alleged case against Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

Pimentel also scored Corpus for leaking raw information to media "that malign and put in doubt the reputations of people."

Pimentel said Corpus had admitted bypassing the regular channels of command.

"And what does his superiors say about Col. Corpus' actuations?" Pimentel said. "Nothing by way of restraining or cautioning him, much less by way of sanctioning him."

He said Corpus should not blurt out his tentative findings in public "as if these were gospel truth at the expense of the people who catch his or his bosses' fancy."



CAN an L-300 van accommodate 50 boxes of Nokia cell phones allegedly bought by Sen. Loren Legarda as charged by Mawanay? Senate personnel take the trouble to find out.

JESS YUSON

Civil society

Pimentel also noted the flak that the Senate has been drawing from civil society for its treatment of Corpus. At the hearing, Corpus had decried the role reversal, wondering why the investigator was the one being investigated.

"That is the way propagandists had distorted and are now distorting what really happened in the Senate hearing last Friday," Pimentel said.

He said that the Senate committees had merely wanted to find out the "sweeping allegations" that the Isafp chief raised against Lacson and other people through the media.

"But the propagandists or spinmeisters apparently want us, the senators, to accept what Col. Corpus fed us—gossip and all—without verifying the premises of his report, all because he said so," Pimentel said.

Osmeña said the Senate erred when it agreed to investigate Lacson, saying that the matter should be best left to the Ombudsman.

"It was wrong of the Senate to have embarked on that investigation. It is not our job to find Sen. Lacson guilty or innocent. That role belongs to the Ombudsman. Col. Corpus baited us into the 'investigation' and we foolishly took the bait," Osmeña said.

He added that the Senate "deserved the scorn for failing to resist the temptation."

Ador sues 8 senators for illegal detention

BY MICHAEL LIM UBAC

ANGELO "Ador" Mawanay's lawyers yesterday filed with the Office of the Ombudsman a complaint-affidavit against eight senators who ordered his detention Friday.

In the three-page document, Mawanay charged Senators Robert Barbers, Loren Legarda, Aquilino Pimentel, Teresa Aquino-Oreta, Noli de Castro, John Osmeña, Rodolfo Biazon and Robert Jaworski with unlawful detention.

Ombudsman Aniano Desierto refused to comment on Mawanay's complaint.

"We will first examine the complaint and evaluate if there is a basis to proceed to formal investigation," he said, adding that he had given his officials two days to study the complaint "very well" and make their recommendation.

In the complaint, Mawanay said the eight senators violated Article 124 of the Revised Penal Code, which deals with the issue of detention without lawful authority.

He said the senators violated this provision because he was detained without a citation of contempt from the Senate.

And even if the Senate had made such a citation, he said, it had no legal grounds to detain him.

According to Mawanay, one can be cited in contempt only if one disobeys an order of the Senate, refuses to testify, or testifies falsely.

"How do you know that I testified falsely? I just answered the questions (of Senator Legarda)," Desierto quoted Mawanay as saying in the document.

During the Friday Senate hearing jointly conducted by the blue ribbon, public safety and defense committees, Mawanay claimed that Legarda bought 1,000 smuggled cellular phones from him in 1998.

It was Legarda who raised the issue, but she flatly denied his allegation.

At one point Pimentel moved to have Mawanay taken by the Senate in custody until he could produce evidence to back his claim.

Desierto said his office would first determine if the detention of Mawanay were "an official act of the Senate on an order from an individual."

"If it is an official act, then there's a cloud of legality that needs to be clarified first," he said.

As to whether Mawanay testified falsely, Desierto said: "We can't say. We will look into it."

Brother Mike explains 'veep' slip

(From page A1)

three-tier birthday cake, El Shaddai leader Mike Velarde yesterday clarified reports that he had introduced her as the "*kasalukuyang pangalawang Pangulo*" (incumbent second or Vice President) at the 17th anniversary celebration of his group on Sunday.

He said he stammered during the introduction, and so was misheard.

In fact, he said, he was even responsible for convincing Joseph Estrada to leave Malacañang on Jan. 20 so that Ms Macapagal could assume the presidency.

"I would like to correct the misimpression. I have recognized her as President since she was sworn into office," Velarde said shortly after the President arrived at the El Shaddai offices in Makati City to wish him well on his 62nd birthday.

The birthday boy said observers might have misinterpreted him when he stammered on the word "Pangulo."

"*Wala akong sinabing 'pangalawa.' Ang sinabi ko ang kasalukuyang Pang . . .Pangulo. Siguro yung aking pag*-stammer, *nung hindi ko natuloy yung Pangulo, yon ang kanilang binigyan ng* meaning," Velarde told reporters earlier in the day.

He said he went on to introduce his guest as "Her Excellency, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo."

After Ms Macapagal graced the anniversary rites of the Catholic charismatic group as well as the 62nd birthday celebration of its leader, Velarde declared that he would "definitely" endorse her for reelection in 2004 if she performs well during her first term.

"This is my birthday wish: that our country will move forward under the presidency of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo," he added.

"Thank you very much, Brother Mike," a beaming Ms Macapagal said as Senate President Franklin Drilon and other guests looked on.

The President found time in her busy schedule to spend more than an hour at Velarde's birthday luncheon at the Amvel Group of Companies' Makati office.

Other guests included Drilon, Manila Auxiliary Bishop and El Shaddai adviser Teodoro Bacani, former Senate Majority Leader Francisco Tatad and his wife Fenny, Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon and Cavite Gov. Ayong Maliksi.

EL SHADDAI
Happy Birthday
BRO. MIKE

PRESIDENTIAL visit to birthday boy, Mike Velarde, who observes his 62nd birthday on Monday. Another well-wisher is Senate President Franklin Drilon.

EDWIN BACASMAS

Trying hard

Velarde seemed convinced that Ms Macapagal plans to run again in 2004. "Why, that is the direction she is taking now. That is the reason why she is persevering now, yes," he said.

After the President left, Velarde hinted he would pick Ms Macapagal over another purported presidential aspirant, the beleaguered Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

But, he added, "that is still a long way from now. Well, (yes) if the President does well and I think she's doing very well and trying very hard. Because our problem in the Philippines is (the need for) continuity, right?" he told reporters.

Asked to assess Ms Macapagal's first six months in office, he said: "Well, she came in at a difficult time but in spite of that, we're still here and she is trying very hard and I think we should really help her."

Erap's last hours

Velarde said he recognized Ms Macapagal as the rightful President as soon as she was sworn in.

"Of course, from the very beginning when she took oath of office," he said. "In fact, I have not talked about it previously but this is what I will tell you. During the last hours of Erap, I was the one who convinced Erap to get out of Malacañang and to give in to what was happening during that time."

Velarde said he had dinner with Ms Macapagal on the first week of her being sworn into office.

Afterward, he and the President held consultation sessions "every other week," he said.

He said that unlike Estrada, Ms Macapagal did not need a spiritual adviser. "I think she decided not to get any (spiritual adviser) because she is morally discerning," Velarde said.

He said he kidded the President that she was a better preacher than he was.

Peacemaker?

Ms Macapagal found herself in the company of Lacson and Sen. Luisa "Loi" Estrada during the El Shaddai anniversary rally at the Rizal Park. She acknowledged the two opposition senators in her speech.

Velarde said he would play the role of peacemaker between Ms Macapagal and the opposition camp, including the Estradas, Lacson and other opposition leaders.

But he said Lacson and Loi Estrada have expressed willingness to support the Macapagal administration.

"Yes, we will (ask) everyone to get along well with each other so that we will become united. We'll ask everybody to support our government so that our country will be in good shape," Velarde said.

He added that he was in the position to counsel leaders for the good of the country. "Sometimes, what I'm telling them hurts, but it's the truth. Because when you are in power, you cannot grasp (the sentiments) of those below," he said.

But militant groups hit the President for hobnobbing with personalities in the Estrada camp, describing her as a "political flirt."

Calling her presence at the religious group's gathering "unpresidential," the fisher folk group Pamalakaya lamented that Ms Macapagal has supposedly departed from the "ideals and spirit of People Power II."

The Promotion of Church People's Response (PCPR), on the other hand, said the President's attendance was "plain religio-political opportunism."

Pamalakaya information officer Gerry Albert-Corpuz lamented that Ms Macapagal "is courting the support of prominent pro-Estrada personalities at the expense of truth and justice." ***With a report from Andrea Trinidad-Echavez***

RP apologizes to China: It was chance encounter

(From page A1)

to Wang that the hostages were not killed during a military operation.

"It was more of a chance encounter," Lecaros told reporters. "It was a police matter. (But) there were reports of lawless elements in the area, and the nearest military unit responded."

Brig. Gen. Edilberto Adan, Armed Forces spokesperson, also rejected suggestions that the military bungled the operation.

"We don't think it was a bungled operation. There was contact . . . a long firefight and, in the process, they (the two hostages) were killed," Adan told reporters in Camp Aguinaldo.

Maj. Julieto Ando, spokesperson of the Army's 6th Infantry Division based in Cotabato City, said soldiers were tracking down the bandits and their captives in the marshlands of Sultan Kudarat.

For its part, the Chinese Embassy urged the Philippine government "to take the necessary measures to safeguard the lives of the hostages still alive as well as those of all Chinese working or living in the Philippines."

About 60 Chinese are working on the irrigation project that is expected to bring water to 12,000 hectares of rice lands in North Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat.

They have been barred from leaving the site without military escort.

Failure to inform

At the DFA news briefing, Lecaros said Guingona also told Wang that Chinese ransom negotiators had failed to inform local authorities they would be going to the kidnappers' lair to hand over the money.

During bilateral consultations here last week, both governments agreed to reject the ransom demands, Lecaros said.

The Moro bandits decided to kidnap Zhang Zhongyi, Xue Xin, Wang Shengli, and Edwin Lim on Aug. 12 while the four were delivering a P5-million ransom for Zhang Zhongqiang in Datu Piglas, Maguindanao.

Zhang Zhongqiang, an engineer with China Electric Power Technology Import and Export Corp., was kidnapped in June.

Two members of the six-man "negotiating team" escaped and reported the abduction of their four colleagues to authorities.

MILF involved?

Major Ando said documents found on the bodies of the seven kidnappers linked them to the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, which signed a ceasefire deal with the government recently.

Ando said the slain kidnappers had MILF identification papers.

But Ghazali Jaafar, MILF vice chair for military affairs, denied his group was behind the kidnapping.

"Anybody can print MILF IDs or seals with any computer," Jaafar said.

MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu said the names of the slain kidnappers were not in the MILF's roster.

North Cotabato Gov. Emmanuel Piñol said the kidnappers were identified with local MILF leaders.

"I believe the MILF as an organization is not involved but some of its followers are into it," Piñol said.

Kabalu described the killings as "criminal acts" and said "the police had all the right to pursue the kidnappers."

A series of kidnappings involving foreigners in Mindanao has embarrassed the Philippine government.

Another Moro bandit group, the Abu Sayyaf, holds two American and 16 Filipino hostages on Basilan Island. ***With reports from Carlito Pablo in Manila; Edwin O. Fernandez, Charlie S. Senase, Allan A. Nawal and Jeffrey M. Tupas, PDI Mindanao Bureau; and Inquirer wires***

Lim says Wong a 'drug lord'

(From page A1)

facturer, left the country after denying accusations that he and Lacson were engaged in drug trafficking and that he was the senator's contact to a Hong Kong triad.

As a result of Wong's alleged "drug trade," Lim claimed that the businessman became so influential that he allegedly had several justices, politicians, police and military generals and media men on his payroll to protect his organized crime ring.

"Wong was just a small-time garment manufacturer when I met him in 1995, and then he had this sudden affluence. Now, he gives away expensive gifts such as cars, appliances and hosts dinners for these personalities," Lim said, although he refused to name other names.

Lim, a former police official and director of the National Bureau of Investigation, alleged that Wong and Lacson's men in the defunct Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force were behind the murder of an Angelito Sy, who was picked up on May 12, 2000 at Shoemart-North Edsa.

But Lim would not confirm that this was the same Angelito Sy that controversial Isafp witness Angelo Mawanay, aka "Ador," claimed, in a Senate hearing Friday, had been picked up at an SM mall before Lacson aide Michael Ray Aquino shot him dead inside a van.

"Sy was murdered because he told Wong on May 11, 2000 that he knew about the shipment of shabu intended for Wong. Wong got furious and told Sy that he should shut up and that he didn't know what he was saying," Lim claimed.

"The following day, Sy was picked up by PAOCTF agents and was never heard from again," the former mayor said.

200 kg of shabu

Isafp witness Mary Ong, alias Rosebud, a former undercover agent of the PNP Narcotics Command and of the PAOCTF, said the shipment in question was made up of 200 kilos of shabu from China.

"The 200-kilo shabu shipment was from the Chinese Triad and for the disposal of Wong and Lacson. Lacson and Wong were associates in the drug trade," Ong told the INQUIRER in a phone interview from Xiamen yesterday.

According to Lim, Sy was with his wife when the PAOCTF agents took him.

The night before Sy disappeared, Lim said, the Chinese interpreter told his mother that he feared for his life because of his conversation with Wong.

Ong said that like her, Sy was tapped as an interpreter, especially in cases where the Narcotics Command (Narcom) or the PAOCTF apprehended Chinese drug suspects. Ong and Sy could speak Cantonese, Fookien and Mandarin, Rosebud said.

'Pissed off'

Denying Lim's charges, Chavez said his client and the former mayor have known each other since 1991. In fact, Chavez said, Wong donated a "substantial amount" to Lim's campaign kitty in 1995, and supported his presidential bid in 1998.

LIM

"Lim started branding my client as a drug lord because he got so pissed off that Wong opted to support the mayoralty bid of reelectionist Mayor Lito Atienza this year. Lim attributed his defeat to my client's choice to help Atienza instead," said Chavez, a former solicitor general.

Lim, however, denied that Wong was ever his friend. He said he met the businessman during the 1995 election campaign when the latter donated "hundreds" of T-shirts printed with Lim's picture and the moniker, "Dirty Harry." Wong, he said, also donated some posters.

Lim also denied Atienza's claim that the latter met Wong through him. "It was not (I). It was former Councilor Pablo Ocampo Jr. who introduced Wong to Atienza," Lim said.

Ocampo, who was at the same forum, corroborated Lim's claim, adding, "It was then Vice Mayor Lito Atienza who asked me to introduce him to Wong. I did."

Since then, according to Lim, Wong secured a number of "anomalous" contracts from the city government.

"Atienza offered the patrimonial properties to Wong on a silver platter such that Wong now owns several restaurants such as the Seafood (Wharf), the Forest Park Restaurant, the Pantalan sa Maynila Restaurant, and the concession of running the Army Navy Club restaurants," Ocampo said.

"Atienza circumvented the laws in favor of Wong . . . (without) a public bidding, (though) these establishments are sitting on patrimonial property," he said.

Chavez, however, said he has documents to prove that Wong went through a bidding process and won.

He said Wong is set to return in the country to face the charges leveled against him by his detractors.

Senate panel to drop Kuratong inquiry

By Armand N. Nocum

THE SENATE committee on public order and illegal drugs has agreed to drop its investigation into the Kuratong Baleleng rubout case—he same case which military intelligence chief Victor Corpus believes is his strongest against Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

Sen. Robert Barbers said yesterday the panel he chairs will not tackle the Kuratong Baleleng issue because the matter is still pending in court.

"I'd like to inform you that the committee has decided not to ask questions on the Kuratong Baleleng" case, Barbers said in a press briefing. He said it was opposition Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. who brought up the matter.

"I have already agreed to the proposal," he said. But he added that the chairs of the other committees also investigating the matter still have to study the proposal.

Lacson said he was filing a resolution asking the Senate to exclude the Kuratong Baleleng case in its investigation, saying the courts may consider the matter "sub judice."

Lacson did not appear in the hearing, saying he was reserving his participation to today's question hour. But Senate President Franklin Drilon said this was unlikely to happen.

He said Lacson will not be allowed to pose questions to Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes.

"No, not in the question hour tomorrow (Tuesday)," he said when asked whether Lacson will be allowed to throw questions at Reyes.

Under the Senate rules, only Reyes will be allowed to talk, although senators can ask questions of Corpus and Armed Forces Chief of Staff Diomedio Villanueva through Reyes.

According to Pimentel, who filed the resolution to call Reyes to a question hour, the discussions will center mostly on the matter of finding out how intelligence funds are used in the defense department, monitoring its use, and identifying the authorization needed for the use of funds.

The discussion will also center on "determining the propriety of the use and release of raw reports and final intelligence reports, and identifying the proper recipients thereof."

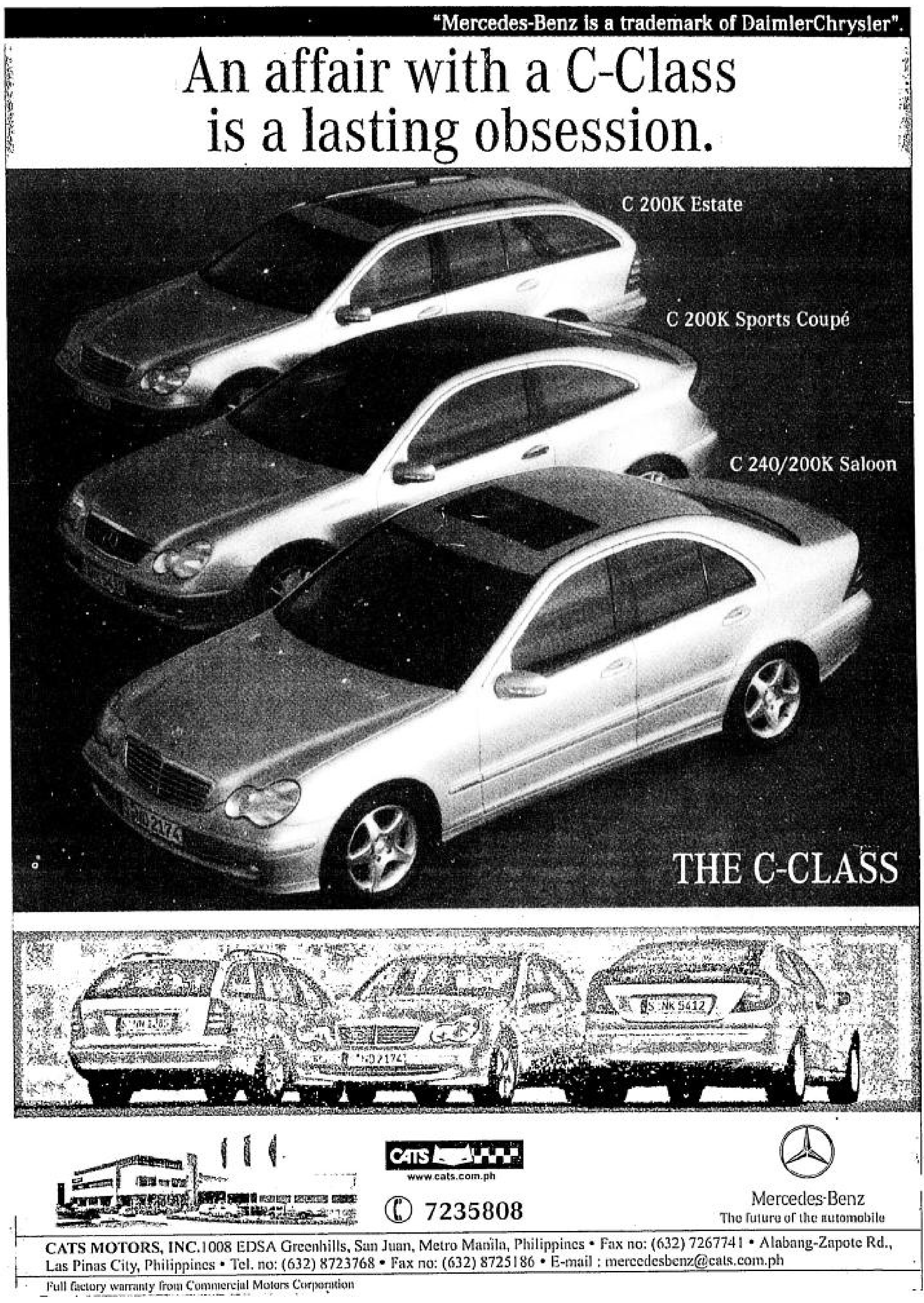
GMA approves Reyes appearance

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has given permission to Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes to appear at the Senate "question hour" today to field questions about the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces' allegations against Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

The President's spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao confirmed this, saying that the military had nothing to hide.

"The position of the President is the Armed Forces of the Philippines has nothing to hide . . . the President's instruction was simply for Secretary Reyes to explain the side of the AFP and the Isafp which is under his control," Tiglao said.

He reiterated that the President still supports Isafp chief Col. Victor Corpus. "Of course. If he's not in the good graces (of the President), he would be moved out or transferred," Tiglao said. *Juliet Javellana*



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Botolan folk all set to evacuate

(From page A1)

and were ready to evacuate any time.

Some residents had already left their villages and only the menfolk were left to tend farm animals and guard their homes especially at night, said Arlen Rico, secretary of Botolan Mayor Roger Yap.

The mayor has placed 30 dump trucks on standby for evacuation purposes.

The PDCC has recommended the closure of a 6-kilometer highway that traverses Barangay Porac and the Botolan town proper to preempt any untoward incident should a large volume of water hit the town

Geologist Rodolfo and the Britain-based Oxfam aid organization advised the residents " get ready, be alert and prepare contingency plans" in the likelihood of a lahar deluge.

The volcanic lake, formed by the 1991 eruption, could release its estimated contents of 210 million cubic meters of water, experts had warned.

On Sunday, the team of Aeta workers, engineers and rescue personnel tasked to construct a canal in the volcano's crater pulled out from the volcano's peak due to continuous rains brought by tropical depressions "Jolina" and "Pabuk."

James Sychioco of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said in a radio interview that the group completed its mission to assess where best to dig the canal.

"The actual digging would be done when the weather clears up to lessen the danger," Sychioco said.

Phivolcs officials have said the government had a two-month window to implement the project, believed to be the first of its kind anywhere.

The public works department plans to use 100 Aetas armed only with picks and shovels to dig the canal because there are no roads to drive earthmovers up to the crater wall.

The canal would be 5 meters high, 5-meter wide and 100 meters long. The Department of Public Works and Highways and the Phivolcs can then decide when to gradually release the water from the lake.

"The worst-case scenario of the lake emptying all of its contents will not happen. The danger is only on the 10-20 meter upper part," Sychioco said.

"The bedrocks at the bottom are competent to impound the water," he said.

The crater-lake has a maximum depth of about 100 meters, the public works department said.

Rodolfo decried the exploitation of Aetas. Their P180-wage, he said, was a "pitiful amount for people who were risking their lives."

He said it was not safe for the members of the tribe to be working on the volcano's peak during storms or typhoons. Aside from strong winds and heavy rains, there is also the danger of being struck by lightning while they work on the peak, he said.

Rodolfo had previously said that water in the lake could be drained using pumps. *With a report from AFP*

Sorry, People Power not for export–FVR

(From page A1)

pine economy was on the way to recovery and that the year 2002 would hail a "new regime of order and stability" in the country.

"I am pleased to report that the Philippine economy is on the recovery mode, and we look forward to stronger growth in the coming months," said Ms Macapagal, who was swept to the presidency in January after People Power II ousted her predecessor, Joseph Estrada.

She said that Mindanao was also facing an "impending new era of peace" because of peace negotiations with the secessionists, and that similar efforts were being conducted with communist rebels.

The President said she had given the military up to the end of the year to crush the Abu Sayyaf bandit group, which had shattered the country's image with two international abductions.

She said she would devote "every ounce of my energy" to uplift the lives of the teeming masses.

"We hope to inaugurate the year 2002 with a new regime of order and stability in our country," she said.

In her own speech before the gathering, Pinoy Times president Eugenia D. Apostol recounted the "virtual martial law situation" in June 1999 when Estrada "inspired" an advertising boycott of the INQUIRER and sued the Manila Times for an offending report.

Apostol, founding chair of the INQUIRER, spoke of the contribution of the media, including Pinoy Times, in "quickly politic(izing) the entire country."

She noted that People Power I, which ousted the dictator Ferdinand Marcos, was two and a half years in the making, and People Power II, only four months.

"What made the difference?" Apostol said, "Media made the difference."

Sovereign power

According to Ramos, the Philippines' 1987 Constitution clearly states that the sovereign power of the government resides in the people—a provision that has been upheld thrice by the Supreme Court since its ratification.

The country's highest law also mandates the Armed Forces to protect the citizens, whether they are in their homes or marching in the streets in protest, he said.

"I don't know if these provisions exist in other countries. But the fact is that the Philippine style of democracy is different from other countries'," Ramos said, adding:

"Our people do not have anything other than liberal democracy, although it's very defective, I understand."

He said the government was "working" to correct this "defective" democratic system, so that it would become a better mechanism for government.

Ramos made his remarks when asked by one of the conference participants what the other Asian countries could learn from the popular uprisings in the Philippines.

He said he had cautioned government officials "not to export people power to other countries."

He also said such popular revolts, which had been simultaneously praised and criticized in the international community, followed years of dictatorship, injustice and corruption.

"People Power II is something else. The sovereign power resides in the people," Ramos said.

Currency controls

Rigoberto Tiglao, spokesperson for the President, said the "most provocative" question thrown at her was on the imposition of currency controls, with which Malacañang warned speculators when the peso reached 51 against the US dollar last week.

"And the President emphasized again that she was not ruling that out. It's an option that she is not actively studying, but she simply can't shut the door on any policy that would be good for the country's economy," Tiglao said.

The President said foreign investments became robust again after the political situation stabilized when she was sworn into office.

She said the peso had regained its value, at 51 to $1 last Friday.

"Our efforts to curb dollar speculation and dollar hoarding, a major cause of the foreign exchange deficit, are paying off," she said.

"As a result, we expect shares to improve, strengthened by bargain hunting. The strong gains of the peso are soon to be accelerated by the administrative and legislative reforms we are doing in the capital markets," she added.

AT THE FORUM for Asian editors and publishers on Monday, President Macapagal questions. It also marks the farewell conference for Thomas Bernd Stehling (at right), outgoing director of the Asian Media project of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.

EDWIN BACASMAS

Among these reforms, she said, was ridding the securities regulation code of restrictive provisions that were preventing players from increasing their participation in the Philippine market.

The President said the government was confident of staying at the year-end deficit target ceiling of P145 billion because January-July figures had reached only P82.5 billion, way below the programmed deficit for the period of P93 billion.

"We attribute this to prudent expenditures and the outstanding performance of the Bureau of Treasury," she said.

The President said agriculture, which accounts for 25 percent of the Gross Domestic Product, grew by 3.01 percent in the first six months of the year compared with a poor 1.34 percent for the same period last year.

"And we are hopeful that we will hit our growth target of 3 to 4 percent by year end," she said.

She also cited the results of her visit to Malaysia, her first state visit, early this month.

Full bookings

Ms Macapagal said improvements in peace and order had lured back tourists. She said flights from Malaysia, Singapore and China were "fully booked."

"Mindanao faces a bright future because of a new impending era of peace made possible by agreements concluded last week among the government and the Mindanao secessionist groups as well as economic agreements between the government and private sectors of the Philippines and Malaysia," she said.

The President also said the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front had signed a general ceasefire agreement.

"Our peace negotiations with the MILF will continue until we have reached a final solution to its grievances," she said.

She expressed gladness that the MILF and the Moro National Liberation Front had reunited, saying this would "help speed up the restoration of peace and prosperity in Mindanao."

The President told her audience that Mindanao was a major supplier of food for the country and accounted for 45 percent of the national agricultural exports.

"In Mindanao, particularly in the island of Basilan, our military and police forces have orders to crush the Abu Sayyaf terrorists before the end of the year," she said.

She pointed out that "whatever" the results of the plebiscite in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, it would help strengthen "regional autonomy" in the South.

The President declared that "we have turned the tide against professional crime syndicates, including kidnapping gangs."

She said index crimes dropped 7 percent in the first half of the year.

She said the "war against graft and corruption" was in full swing to "get rid of dishonest and incompetent officials" and to pave the way for an "ethical reform" in the bureaucracy.

She also said industrial peace was reigning as well.

But above all, she said she was determined to see that the problem of mass poverty would be minimized within the decade.

Civil society group vows to battle 'narco-politics'

BY CHRISTIAN ESGUERRA
AND NORMAN BORDADORA

KATOTOHANAN, a newly formed alliance of key players in the People Power II uprising, yesterday vowed to organize "people power" at the community level against "narco-politics."

Upset by the Senate's treatment of military intelligence chief Victor Corpus and witness Angelo "Ador" Mawanay, civil society groups and the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) pressured senators to focus on the allegations against Sen. Panfilo Lacson, instead of merely attacking the authority and credibility of his accusers.

Msgr. Hernando "Ding" Coronel, media director of the CBCP, said the Senate investigation into the truth or falsehood of Corpus' allegations that Lacson laundered drug money abroad had veered away from the main concern.

The statements came after senators, in a hearing Friday, grilled Corpus on his authority to investigate Lacson instead of allowing him to present his evidence and witnesses.

"If the government is serious in coming out with the truth, the senators should start focusing on Senator Lacson's investigation," Coronel said.

"We affirm the call of Archbishop Orlando Quevedo, president of the CBCP, for the Senate to ferret out the truth regarding Senator Lacson's alleged illegal activities," Coronel told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

"We join other civil society groups in asking the Senate to focus on the main concern of their investigation," added Coronel, who is also the rector of the Manila Cathedral.

Katotohanan members will stage a picket in front of the Senate this week to pressure lawmakers into focusing their investigation on Lacson.

"We are watching you . . . , we are all around you and we will surprise you," said Jesuit priest Carmelo Caluag II at a meeting of the alliance at the Ateneo de Manila University yesterday.

"This is our last chance to fight narco-politics in our country. We have to do it now, not tomorrow," said singer Jim Paredes, a member of Katotohanan.

The CBCP had no comment on the fate of Mawanay, who was ordered detained by the Senate after he accused Sen. Loren Legarda of buying P8 million worth of smuggled cellular phones and Sen. Noli de Castro of being on Lacson's payroll.

No blessing

Mawanay was reportedly planning on meeting Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin yesterday afternoon at the archbishop's palace in Mandaluyong City to ask for a pastoral blessing. He did not follow through with the plan.

The Isafp reportedly took custody of Mawanay when he was released from Senate detention yesterday.

Katotohanan is also planning to launch an information drive in communities, schools and parishes nationwide on how to combat the supposed specter of a country ruled by drug lords.

"The struggle against narco-politics might be the main event," Caluag said. "We will not stage a people power similar to Edsa I or II. This time, people power will emerge at the community level."

He said the Senate should show its support for the campaign by ensuring a fair and credible investigation of Lacson.

Akbayan, another civil society group, also demanded a thorough inquiry.

"But what we want is closure," the group said in a statement. "We want someone to go to jail and pay for his crimes at the end of all the brouhaha."

Katotohanan noted that the rate of drug addiction in the country is rapidly rising due to numerous organized crime syndicates with supposed connections with some government officials.

Citing recent survey results, Caluag said at least one out of 10 youngsters aged between 7 and 21 has tried illegal drugs. Most of those hooked on drugs belong to the A, B and E socio-economic brackets, and come from Metro Manila and Mindanao.

Over 1.8 million Filipinos have drug problems and around half of the crimes committed every year are drug-related or drug-induced, the group claimed.

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MACHISMO is dead. Let's celebrate. Machismo is nothing but ego-trip, anyways.

Look what happened to Jean Van de Velde in the British Open a while back. The French employed machismo in trying to win the British Open in 1998. He lost. Badly. He threw away a won game by using clubs that weren't necessary, and hitting shots that were unnecessary.

Perhaps, David Toms had Van De Valde in mind when he studied his options before he hit his second shot yesterday on the 72nd hole of the 83rd PGA Championship. The 490-yard hole happens to be the longest in PGA Championship history, and is one of the hardest par-4s in the world; a large pond virtually surrounds the green.

David Toms taught the world how to play it right yesterday.

From 210 yards away, Toms had first pulled out a 5-wood. Then he changed his mind. He replaced the club with a sand wedge and laid up 90 yards to the green. He next wedged it to 12 feet left of the cup. When Phil Mickelson missed his tying putt from 30 feet, falling short by a mere two inches, Toms rammed home the winning putt.

That putt seemed to take all of eternity before it hit the heart of the hole.

"It's 12 footers that win majors," said Toms. "Been practicing that kind of putt all my life."

No wonder Toms didn't tarry at all before he stroked that putt for his first major that earned him $936,000, one of golf's biggest paychecks.

Had he missed, he would have gone into a playoff with Mickelson, who is now 0-34 in majors since he turned pro in 1991. Sadly again, Mickelson will remain one of the game's greatest practitioners without a major to show; he will wait another eight months before he gets the chance to aim for it again—the Masters in April next year.

Toms' winning putt proved once more that in golf, putting, seemingly the easiest of all golf shots to execute, spells either victory or defeat.

In putting, no one has a definite edge. To illustrate, Mickelson is the world's No. 2 behind Tiger Woods. David Toms is 19th. Yet, on 16, Mickelson three-putted to allow Toms to regain the lead. To me, that was it for Phil, who pitched in for birdie only a hole ago at the par-3, 240-yard 15th, the hardest hole at the Atlanta Athletic Club, to even up matters with Toms.

In a sense, it was machismo that killed Mickelson's bid for a first major.

Look, he was 50 feet away on 16. He got greedy. Instead of just stroking the ball gently as to just put it close to the hole (a dying putt, sort of), he putted bold, the ball speeding six feet past the cup. He missed it coming back. Completely.

Toms' conservartism on 18 could elicit brickbats. He might yet be labeled a chicken for playing it "commercial" after he laid up. This was a major, you know, where only the boldest compete.

I don't buy that. Toughness should always take precedence over boldness. The decision to lay up was a tough one to make for Toms. When he decided on that, he listened to both his mind and heart. Unlike Pontius Pilate, Toms yielded not to a mob.

PGA CHAMPIONSHIP

Toms denies Mickelson title

DULUTH, Georgia —David Toms showed Phil Mickelson how to get it done Sunday.

In his first time contending for a major, Toms played it conservatively on the decisive 18th hole and made it pay off with a 12-foot (3-meter) par putt to win the PGA Championship in dramatic style and deny Mickelson the major he so badly craves.

With only a one-stroke lead and one hole to play, Toms decided to lay up short of the water on the 490-yard (447-meter) closing hole, the longest par 4 in PGA Championship history, and take his chances with his putter.

It didn't let him down.

After Mickelson's 30-foot (9-meter) birdie putt stopped 2 inches (5 centimeters) short of going in, Toms confidently rapped in his putt for par.

He had told caddie Scott Gneiser, "We're supposed to have to make this to win."

"That's what I used to do on the putting green," he said. "You have a 12-footer to win a major, and that's what I did today."

Toms snatched the lead with a hole-in-one from 243 yards (222 meters) on Saturday and never gave it back. He will be remembered for the 12-footer (3.66 meters) that gave him his first major and a final-round 69 that broke the 72-hole record for major championships.

He finished at 265, breaking by two strokes the record first set at Royal St. George by Greg Norman in the 1993 British Open and later matched by Steve Elkington, who beat Colin Montgomerie in a playoff in the 1995 PGA Championship at Riviera.

Mickelson still doesn't have a major, but no one can question his heart.

"I certainly - certainly tried hard," he said.

He played with courage and skill and made only one mistake on the back nine, but it cost him the major he covets. A three-putt from 50 feet (15.24 meters) on the 16th hole gave Toms a one-stroke lead, and the 34-year-old from Louisiana never gave it back.

The thrilling finish had a familiar look to Mickelson.

Two years ago in the U.S. Open at Pinehurst, Payne Stewart had a one-stroke lead going into the 18th when he decided to lay up with a wedge instead of risking a full shot out of the rough that could have gone anywhere.

Stewart made a 15-foot (4-meter) putt for par to win.

Toms' ball was sitting up in the first cut of rough, but it was about a foot above his feet. That usually means the ball will fly from right to left - to a green surrounded by water in front and to the left.

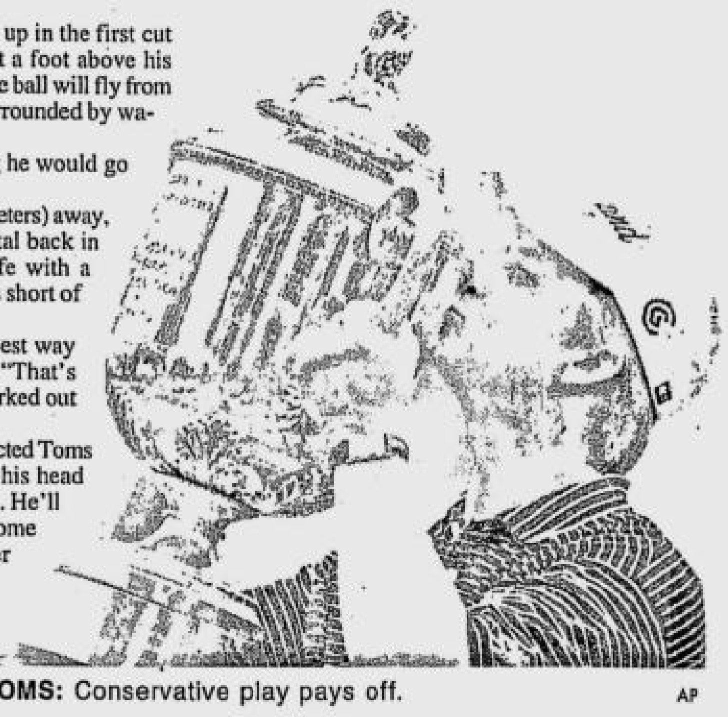
"I actually was hoping he would go for it," Mickelson said.

From 210 yards (190 meters) away, Toms put his fairway metal back in the bag and played it safe with a wedge, laying up 90 yards short of the green.

"I just felt it was my best way to make 4," Toms said. "That's what I had to do, and it worked out just fine."

Mickelson said he expected Toms to make par. He dropped his head when the winning putt fell. He'll have to carry that burdensome label of the "best player never to have won a major" for eight more months. His next chance is the Masters.

AP



TOMS: Conservative play pays off. AP

Rafter defeats quitting Kuerten

INDIANAPOLIS —Gustavo Kuerten of Brazil quit with a rib cage injury just 22 minutes into the RCA Championship final against Pat Rafter of Australia on Sunday—the French Open winner's second match of the day.

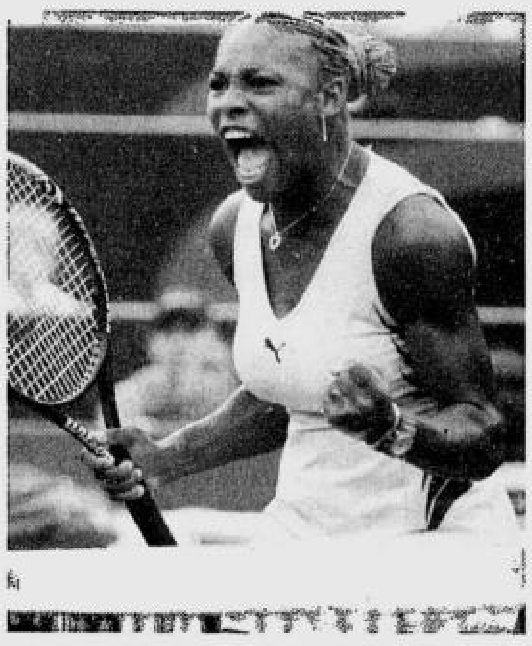
Kuerten won his rain-postponed semifinal against Wimbledon champion Goran Ivanisevic of Croatia 1-6, 6-3, 6-2 Sunday morning, then had only a one-hour break before getting back on court to face Rafter for the title.

It was the second straight week Kuerten was forced to play a semifinal and final on the same day. He beat Tim Henman of Britain and then Rafter to win a tournament in Cincinnati last Sunday.

In Indianapolis, it was evident something was wrong with Kuerten almost as soon as he stepped on court to face Rafter.

Roddick prevails

WASHINGTON—American Andy Roddick won the first hard-court title of his career Sunday by beating Sjeng Schalken of the Netherlands 6-2, 6-3 in the final of the Legg Mason Tennis Classic. *AP*



SERENA Williams exults after beating Jennifer Capriati, 6-1, 6-7, 6-3, to win the Rogers AT&T Cup in Toronto yesterday. AP

Canlubang Amateur today

THE COUNTRY'S top amateurs, led by the members of the SEA Games-bound national squad, take centerstage today as they vie for top honors in the championship division at the start of the Canlubang Amateur Open Golf Championships at the challenging south course of the Canlubang golf complex in Laguna.

Although the club bets, headed by Juvic Pagunsan, enjoy the proverbial home course advantage at the hazard-laden par 72 layout, keen competition is seen among the best amateurs in the land with Marlon Dizon back to defend the title he won last year.

The absence of back-to-back national champion Angelo Que, who begged off to honor a commitment abroad, doesn't diminish the talent of the field as Pagunsan and fellow national teammates Jay Bayron, Jesselity Zaragoza and Marvin Dumandan and alternative Gene Bondoc are in the fold to lead the chase in the 72-hole championship.

They will be out to prove they deserve to be in the RP team with the event serving as part of their preparations for next month's SEA Games in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Manila Southwoods standout Hanson So is also competing in the premier division of the Globe Telecom-backed event, a 4-in-1 tournament which also includes the 54-hole stroke play championship for women and the 36-hole championship division "B" for men.

Also on tap are the 36-hole championships in Classes A, B and C for men and women slated Thursday and Friday.

Carmelette Villaroman and Ruby Chico-Walker lead the cast in the women's side of the event supported by hole sponsors Turf Company, Shopwise Rustan's Supercenters, Inc., San Miguel Corp., Inter A's Corp., and South East Asia Middle East Corp.

Asian badminton tourney elims at Philsports on

CHINA's Gao Liong and Huang Sui, the world's top ladies doubles team, banner a star-studded field in the JVC Asian Badminton which starts with a qualifier today at the Philsports Arena.

Indonesia's Tony Gunawan and Halim Haryanto banner the men's doubles competitions, while Taufik Hidayat and Xie Xinfang will defend their men's and ladies' singles titles, respectively.

China, Indonesia, Korea and Malaysia banner a stellar cast while Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong are also expected to crowd the favorites for honors in this five-day, $150,000 event which is being held under the auspices of the Asian Badminton Confederation in coordination with the Philippine Badminton Association.

Tickets are available at popular prizes at all National Bookstore branches, Robinsons Galleria (Ortigas, Ermita) and at Tower Records outlets in Makati and Alabang.

The event is backed by Yonex, Manila Galleria Suites, 103.5K Lite, 96.3 DW Rock and the Philippine Star. IBC 13 and NBN 4 will televise the event. Kennie and Kennevic Asuncion will banner the local challenge.

Luzvimin golf lures 140 bets

NO less than 140 players from 20 clubs all over the country are expected to join the 2001 Luzvimin Golf Invitational—one of the major events in the Women's Golf Association of the Philippines calendar—which fires off tomorrow at the Cebu Country Club.

Entries from Alabang, Alta Vista, Bacolod, Camp John Hay, Club Filipino de Cebu, Lanang, Manila Southwoods, Riviera, Villamor, Sta. Elena, Aguinaldo, Apo, Baguio, Canlubang, Del Monte, Marapara, Pamplona Plantation and Victorias are set to join the 54-hole event.

Philippine Airlines is coming in as the official carrier of the event.

Dolphins snap 2-game slump

HOST Philippine Christian University halted its two-game losing streak following a 74-69 triumph over University of Perpetual Help-Rizal yesterday in the NCAA basketball tournament at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum.

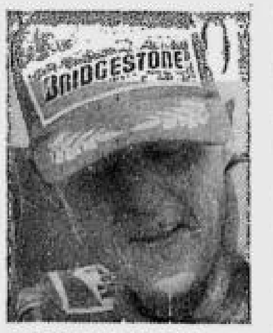
Infusing a lot of muscle inside the paint, the Dolphins outsteadied the Altas down the stretch and went on to nail their third win in nine games. *June Navarro*

PCU 74—Omolon 17, Franco 13, Asmad 9, Gatdula 8, Gaspi 7, Agahan 5, Soriano 5, Roque 4, Ilagan 4, Sanz 2.

UPHR 69—Malabanan 33, Tolomia 12, Cosme 8, Jensen 6, Hawkins 6, Quiazon 2, Ibrahim 2, Alejandro 0.

Quarters: 15-16, 35-32, 53-54, 74-69

Schumacher humble in victory



SCHUMACHER

BUDAPEST, Hungary —Michael Schumacher, a man known for his nerves of steel and his will to win, became very human Sunday, tearful and humble after capturing his fourth Formula One championship.

The elder of the German racing brothers joined the ranks of Formula One legends like Juan Manuel Fangio, Alain Prost and Ayrton Senna in the sport's history books.

With the victory, the 32-year-old German moved into a second-place tie with Prost on the all-time list with four Formula One championships. Fangio leads the with five.

Schumacher's win, his seventh in 13 races this season, also matched Prost's all-time record of 51 career Grand Prix wins.

Racer killed

SPRINGFIELD, Illinois—Stock car champion Dean Roper died Sunday from injuries in an ARCA event at the Illinois State Fairgrounds, 11 months after his son, Tony, was killed in a NASCAR truck series race in Texas. *AP*

Pagcor gives ₱5M for SEAG campaign

THE PHILIPPINE campaign to the Kuala Lumpur Southeast Asian Games got another boost after the Philippine Amusements and Gaming Corporation committed to infuse at least P5 million for its television coverage.

Commissioner Cynthia Carrion of the Philippine Sports Commission said yesterday that Pagcor would set aside the amount to cushion the P15-million budget needed by National Broadcasting Network to bankroll the airing of the games.

Carrion, a close friend of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, said it was Malacañang which instructed Pagcor to chip in the said amount.

She added Malacañang is also trying to convince other government corporation and agencies to help NBN on its endeavor.

On NBN's side, Carrion said the televison network got the nod of Unilever Philippines as one of its sponsors in the biennial meet slated Sept. 9-17. Unilever is the maker of the soap "Gloria Labandera" manufactured personally for President Macapagal-Arroyo.

June Navarro

BASEBALL RESULTS

AMERICAN LEAGUE

East	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	73	61	.589	—
Boston	67	55	.549	5
Toronto	58	66	.468	15
Baltimore	53	71	.427	20
Tampa Bay	44	81	.352	29 1/2
Central				
Cleveland	69	54	.561	
Minnesota	65	59	.524	4 1/2
Chicago	60	62	.492	8 1/2
Detroit	51	71	.418	17 1/2
Kansas City	50	74	.403	19 1/2
West				
Seattle	89	35	.718	—
Oakland	72	52	.581	17
Anaheim	66	58	.532	23
Texas	54	70	.436	35

NATIONAL LEAGUE

East	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	68	55	.553	—
Philadelphia	67	56	.545	1
Florida	59	64	.480	9
New York	56	68	.452	12 1/2
Montreal	53	71	.427	16 1/2
Central				
Houston	71	53	.573	—
Chicago	68	54	.557	2
St. Louis	66	55	.553	2 1/2
Milwaukee	53	68	.438	16 1/2
Cincinnati	48	75	.390	22 1/2
Pittsburgh	45	78	.366	25 1/2
West				
Arizona	72	51	.585	—
San Francisco	70	54	.564	2 1/2
Los Angeles	67	57	.540	5 1/2
San Diego	61	62	.496	11
Colorado	53	70	.431	19

COMPLETE RESULTS

American League

Texas 8, Toronto 4; Baltimore 13, Boston 7; Anaheim 4, Cleveland 1; Seattle 10, N.Y. Yankees 2; Detroit 4, Kansas City 3; Tampa Bay 5, Minnesota 1; Oakland 8, Chicago White Sox 7.

National League

Milwaukee 6, Cincinnati 4; St. Louis 9, Philadelphia 0; Houston 12, Pittsburgh 2; Colorado 6, Florida 5; N.Y. Mets 6, Los Angeles 5; Montreal 2, San Diego 1; Arizona 13, Chicago Cubs 6; San Francisco 4, Atlanta 1. *AP*

10 YEARS AGO

VISWANATHAN Anand beat Anatoli Karpov in 70 moves to even their quarterfinal match at 3-3 in the World Championship in Brussels. Anand preserved a one-pawn edge until the endgame.

Toxic waste at Clark

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

THERE is a long overdue plan by the government to relocate the dilapidated Rizal Memorial Sports Complex, which was built way back in 1934, to the sprawling Clark Special Economic Zone in Pampanga. It's high time we replace the Rizal Memorial Complex because it is often flooded when it rains and waterless during summer. Besides, it's frustrating to see the Philippines without a modern sports complex at present unlike some of its neighbors in Asia.

Many are naturally elated to know that Malacañang has approved the plan to construct a multi-billion complex at the former American military base. But I think Clark is not the ideal place to relocate the outmoded RMSC. Why? Because there are confirmed reports about the presence of toxic waste contamination at Clark which has already resulted in the death of more than 100 people.

Methinks Malacañang should shelve the plan to build a sports complex at Clark because our athletes could be exposed to physical and mental hazards while training there. I say this because when a problem is sensed well in advance it can easily be solved; if one ignores it any solution will be too late because the problem will have become incurable.

Instead of Clark, why not scout for other alternative sites which are pollution-free and environment-friendly like the cities of Tagaytay, Antipolo or Baguio or nearby provinces like Bulacan and Cavite?

* * *

PNCC WRITES. Luis F. Sison, chair and CEO of the Philippine National Construction Corp., faxed us a letter in response to my piece commending PNCC traffic officers G.A. Carpio and V.A. Pascual for their fast, firm and courteous handling of our complaint during a recent near-tragic incident at the North Luzon Tollway. I felt, it is worth printing excerpts of the letter for the benefit of all NLT motorists. Mr. Sison says:

"The prompt action of our personnel in apprehending the erring driver is part of the PNCC's ongoing program to discipline motorists and restore order in the tollways. Our program for a "Safe, Efficient, Environmental and Disciplined" tollways or what we call SEED, outlines our commitment to the Filipino people, particularly the motoring public.

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SPORTS

AL S. MENDOZA, Editor ▪ EDWIN M. VILLANUEVA, Assistant Editor

RP beats Mongolia by 25

KAOHSIUNG, Taiwan—The RP FedEx team continued to create a stir in the 24th Williams Jones Cup here, whipping Mongolia, 97-72, Sunday evening at the Feng Sheng Stadium. It was the second win in three outings for the Filipinos, being represented here by the FedEx Laguna Lakers with a sprinkling of Philippine Youth players.

SPORTS ON TV

COMPILED BY LORENZO MANGUIAT

TENNIS: US Open 2001, Men's and Women's First Round at 7 a.m. (r – 7 p.m.) and 10:30 p.m. on Star Sports
ATP Hamlet Cup, Finals at 10:30 a.m. (r) on Star Sports
GOLF: U.S. Amateur Open Golf Championship, Final Round at 2 p.m. (r) on ESPN
Senior PGA Ford Senior Players Championships, Second Round at 2 p.m. (r) on Star Sports

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We lacked intensity in Game 4–Lang

BY JUNE NAVARRO

RED Bull coach Yeng Guiao thinks the loss of his two key players—Kerby Raymundo and Junthy Valenzuela—led to their downfall against San Miguel Beer in Game 4 of their Finals showdown Sunday night.

Red Bull import Antonio Lang believes otherwise.

"No. I don't think their absence triggered our defeat. We had a chance to beat them, it's just San Miguel played with more intensity against us," said Lang, after the Thunder lost to the Beermen, 88-72, that tied their series at 2-2.

And 6-foot-8 Devonn Harp, one of Red Bull's three "imports" the other being Lang and Mick Pennisi, shares his sentiment."We just didn't play hard enough. We'll bounce back next time," said Harp.

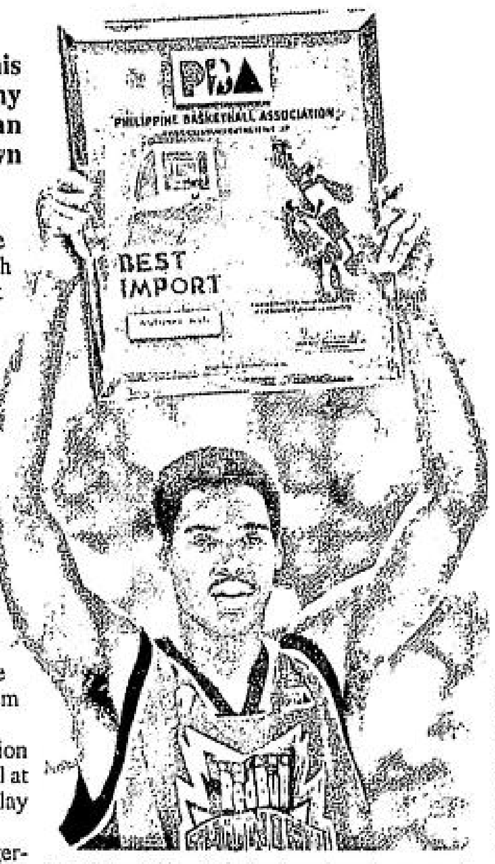
In contrast, Guiao had his own analysis, putting the blame on the ejection of Valenzuela in the first quarter and the suspension of Raymundo that signaled the Thunder's breakdown.

Raymundo was slapped with a one-game suspension and fined P20,000 for punching SMB's Dorian Pena in Game 3 while Valenzuela was thrown out of the court for planting a elbow on Nate Johnson's head in the first quarter of Game 4.

"The key here in the series is to play with a complete lineup. If we had a complete lineup, we could have given them a good fight," said Guiao.

He added Valenzuela's absence hurt the Thunder's rotation as he was left without a good shooter and a great defender all at the same time. "Going into the game, we were prepared to play without Kerby, but not without Junthy," said Guiao.

Valenzuela and Raymundo's absence allowed the trigger-happy Danny Seigle to go on a shooting spree undefended.



ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

LANG: "We didn't play hard enough.

Red Bull's Valenzuela fined ₱40,000

RED Bull swingman Junthy Valenzuela was slapped a P40,000 fine by the Office of the PBA Commissioner yesterday for elbowing San Miguel import Nate Johnson on the kisser in Game 4 Sunday.

The second-year pro out of Cebu escaped suspension and the Thunder can count on having an intact lineup when the crucial fifth game of the rugged series is played tomorrow at the Big Dome.

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Pasig factory's fumes kill housewife, down 30 other residents
A21

METRO

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

Tancangco questions ruling on Caloocan plea
A20

NO LESS TRAGIC

While scores of people were killed in the Saturday dawn blaze at the Manor Hotel, one girl died in the fire that hit these houses on Kaliraya Street in Tatalon, also in Quezon City. Residents with puny pails helped firemen put out the flames.

VALHANDUMON

Manor owner charged; 2 officials fired

- Another Quezon City hotel closed for violations
- Genato barred from leaving
- 28 survivors in stable condition

BY PHILIP C. TUBEZA, ANDREA TRINIDAD-ECHAVEZ

INTERIOR Secretary Jose Lina yesterday closed down another Quezon City hotel said to be owned by businessman Willian Tan Genato, owner of the Manor Hotel where Saturday dawn's fire killed 73 people so far, after the second hotel was found violating 12 fire safety regulations.

The closure was carried out even as Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte finally sacked city engineer Alfredo Macapugay to allay fears of a whitewash in the investigation of the fire.

Belmonte also relieved the city's business permits chief, Ricardo Galvez, after the mayor found out that Galvez's office had just renewed Manor's permit about two months ago.

The Manor fire was the third during Macapugay's term. The first two fires were those that hit Ozone Disco in 1998 where at least 162 people were killed and the Lung Center in 1999 where more than 20 people died.

Macapugay is still facing charges of reckless imprudence before the Sandiganbayan in connection with the Ozone tragedy.

Robert Sanseno replaced Macapugay while Pacifico Manghacot took over Galvez's post.

Two others probed

The Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) is also investigating two other business establishments reportedly also owned by Genato, also in Quezon City, that are violating safety rules.

Sir William's Hotel at 39 Timog Avenue was closed for 60 days starting yesterday afternoon after it was found to have violated more safety violations than the Manor Hotel.

The BFP filed charges of reckless imprudence resulting in multiple homicide against Genato for the Manor Hotel fire.

Police sources, however, told the Inquirer that the charges were filed "hastily" and that this might suggest a "cover-up" to protect negligent BFP officials indirectly responsible for the Manor Hotel blaze.

Two respondents

Senior Supt. Romeo Villafuerte, the BFP's metro chief, filed the case before prosecutor Francisco Soler at 3:30 p.m. at the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office.

Named respondents were Genato, of 77 Makapagkawanggawa St., Teacher's Village, Quezon City, and a John Doe. Genato had not shown up as of 4 p.m. yesterday.

Genato has been placed on the immigration watch list to prevent him from leaving the country.

Immigration Commissioner Andrea Domingo ordered airport supervisors around the country to include in their watch list the hotel owner who might attempt to leave the country to avoid prosecution, according

MANOR A20

Hayashi aide could be involved in slay, says prosecutor

BY CHRISTIAN V. ESGUERRA

A NEW twist emerged in the case of the killing of Tadao Hayashi as a Caloocan prosecutor rejected the police theory that the Japanese harpist was slain by his alleged male lover.

Chief Inquest Prosecutor Oliver Yu yesterday said his office found no strong evidence to pin down the primary suspect, Alex Ilagan, 31, Hayashi's masseur and alleged lover, on robbery with homicide charges.

Yu said that pieces of evidence instead showed that Antonio Clet, 47, Hayashi's trusted aide for 13 years, could have a hand in the musician's killing on July 22.

"If I had my way, I would drop the charges against Ilagan and instead prosecute Clet," Yu yesterday told the INQUIRER.

The inquest prosecutor's office is set to release its findings on the evidence police filed against Ilagan.

According to Yu, Clet had the motive to have Hayashi killed — so he could gain control of the harpist's two-bedroom bungalow at LD Village in Tala, Caloocan.

The property was registered in Clet's name after it was bought a few years ago. Local laws barred Hayashi from owning properties in the Philippines.

Yu said Hayashi reportedly planned to sell the house so he could return to Japan for good. "If that happened, there would be nothing left for Clet," Yu said. "That's your motive."

The prosecutor urged investigators to zero in on Clet's unusual response to Hayashi's death.

In his affidavit, Clet said his daughter warned him that something bad might have happened to Hayashi since the lights in his house were out on the night he was killed, according to Yu.

HAYASHI

Instead of checking Hayashi's house right away, Clet first phoned Hayashi's manager the following morning to seek advice, Yu said.

Around 8 a.m. the following day, Clet and barangay watchmen went to Hayashi's house, he said.

In a previous interview with the INQUIRER, Clet explained he was afraid to check his employer's house right away, fearing he might be implicated in the case.

"How come he seemed to know already that something happened to Tadao?" Yu asked. "If that's so, he should have gone straight to the house and checked it without hesitation. That's the natural reaction."

Yu said Caloocan police seemed to be bent on pinning down Ilagan, whom they arrested three days after Hayashi's death.

Investigators deliberately did not include in the documents submitted to the prosecutor's office the 13 sets of fingerprints found in Hayashi's house, he said. "That's because they found out that not one of the fingerprints matched Ilagan's," Yu said.

Police earlier claimed the fingerprints were "contaminated."

'Let not their deaths be in vain'

BY TONETTE OREJAS
PDI Central Luzon Desk

ANGELES CITY—"We have sacrificed six of our people. Let not their deaths go in vain," Korean pastor Rev. Paul Jung said in between sobs.

Members of Jung's congregation cried and prayed for Pastor Elmer Mangacu and his wife Elizabeth, missionaries Eugene de Castro, Eliza Maglambayan and Oliver Lacanilao of Angeles City, and Pastor Emerito Sagcal Jr. of Mabalacat town, who died on Saturday in the Quezon City Manor Hotel blaze.

Yesterday, their bodies arrived here and were brought to the Calvary Temple Ministries International Inc.

Two pastors and a missionary of the Jesus is Lord Ministry in the city of San Fernando and in Mexico town also died in the fire.

But seven others, who joined the Pampanga delegation to an evangelical study at the Araneta Coliseum in Quezon City, survived.

Jung and two others escaped death when they went home on Friday night.

The tragedy, said Jung, might be God's message, if not a wake-up call, to the government.

He said the death toll must make the government realize that it has to "enforce strict and correct safety measures and systems" in the construction of buildings and installa-

'LET NOT/ A20

Prayers saved six

BY CHRISTIAN V. ESGUERRA

SIX Born Again Christians from Infanta, Quezon narrowly escaped death in the Manor Hotel fire last Saturday, according to the Philippine National Red Cross.

Prayers apparently saved the six.

Marcelino Nava remembered that it was around 4 a.m. when screams from all over the hotel jolted him from sleep. The first thing he saw was thick smoke billowing in from under the door of his room.

Nava said he tried to look for his 19 townmates who were also staying in the hotel for the three-day Glorious Covenant Ministry at the Araneta Coliseum. But they were nowhere to be found. Smoke covered the hallway and it was impossible to get through.

Death seemed certain inside the room, Nava said. So he closed his eyes and prayed hard. Then he pulled out the air conditioning unit from its niche in the wall and he broke the window glass.

He went out through the window and jumped. Better try to leave than to stay in the room and die, he thought. He landed on the concrete pavement, with minor bruises.

It was a miracle, he said.

Nava's five townmates—Cecille, Veron, Connie, Tess, and Arlene Evangelista—were just as lucky.

Evangelista and her companions were trapped by thick smoke inside their room. There was no way out but through the window.

Evangelista knelt and prayed hard as smoke began to choke her. When she woke up, she was already in the hospital. Her friends survived, too.

Firemen want NCR fire marshal ousted

BY NELSON F. FLORES

A GROUP of firemen seeks to oust National Capital Region Fire Marshal Romeo Villafuerte over his alleged failure to act against owners of the Manor Hotel in Quezon City, which had violated the Fire Code of the Philippines resulting in Saturday's tragedy.

Alvin Estrada, spokesman of the 13,000-strong United Firefighters of the Philippines, claimed Villafuerte knew that the Manor Hotel violated numerous provisions in the Fire Code as early as Aug. 10, 2000 but had not acted on it.

Estrada also said it is ironic that Quezon City fire chief Ricardo Lemence was sacked from his post even though he had done his duty, while Villafuerte was made chief of the task force that would investigate the Manor Hotel fire.

Estrada said Villafuerte should be among those investigated.

Estrada said that on Aug. 10, 2000, Lemence sent Villafuerte a copy of his "Notice to correct (Fire Code) violation to Manor Hotel management."

FIREMEN/ A20

WAZZZZUP ?
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

8th day CAFE ST. FRANCIS SQ. ORTIGAS CTR.	FREESTYLE (AUGUST 21, TUESDAY)	SPIRIT 67 AUG. 25/634.7696
AUDIOTORIUM 21 WEST AVE., QUEZON CITY	SOUL'D OUT	374.2330/373.5574
BUMA 9595 KAMAGONG ST. MAKATI	MOONSTRUCKS	896.2116/896.1939
Café OVERDRIVE	MARMALADE	FREE ENTRANCE 818.5555/813.1348
CHATTERBOX WEST 41 WEST AVE. QUEZON CITY	CONFUSED X-POWER	P 150 W/ 1 FREE DRINK 411.3650/374.3750
Cowboy Grill BINAN, LAGUNA.	EZEKIEL BROWNIE	NO ENTRANCE FEE ☎ (049) 511.7268
Cowboy Grill ALMANZA, LAS PINAS	GOALKEYS KOOL JACKS	SOUTHBORDER AUG.22 P250 CONS. F & D
Cowboy Grill ARQUEZA ST. MALATE	THINKERS w/ JOGRAD STAY TUNED/CITY BORN	NO ENTRANCE FEE 525.1474/525.4269
Cowboy Grill 431 REMEDIOS ST. MALATE	SERSIDE PUZZLES	NO ENTRANCE FEE ☎ 521.81.43
Cowboy Grill NOVALICHES Q.C.	HOMOSAPIENS HIMIG	MIKE HANOPOL AUG. 23 ☎ 936.9757
KAMPO 2088 #47 WEST AVENUE Q.C.	BLAKDYAK ENTITY/BAND AT WORK	P 200 CONSUMABLE 373.5110/373.7181
EXAMINER'S LITE n'LIVE #52 EXAMINER ST., Q.C.	R.O.B CRUSH & MARVIN	P 150 CONSUMABLE 373.2221/373.7183
MINI AVE MINDANAO AVE COR CONGIL Q.C.	FREESTYLE SPECIAL CONCERT AUG.22	SOUTBORDER AUG.30 453.0080/951.3117
MUSIC WAREHOUSE	ALAMID 7SECONDS	ANDREW E AUG. 25 735.1405/735.1280
TIA MARIA'S JUPITER ST., MAKATI CITY	TONI & GIGI	GROOVE W/ VERSE 2 AUG. 25/890.4735
TROPICAL FOREST	VERSATILE	LUNCH SPECIAL P 250/MON-FRI

TUESDAY, AUGUST 21 9.12-8983

Tancangco questions ruling on Caloocan plea

By Gerald G. Lacuarta

COMMISSION on Elections Commissioner Luzviminda Tancangco yesterday said the Comelec ruling denying the petition to declare a failure of elections in Caloocan City has been railroaded.

Tancangco questioned how Comelec Chair Alfredo Benipayo issued the en banc decision denying the petition and said the case should have been first raffled off to a new ponente who would then pen the majority decision.

On Friday, the Comelec resolved in an en banc decision that there was no failure of election in the city, even as confusion allegedly reigned in many Caloocan precincts on May 14.

The Comelec also dismissed the petition of the Nationalist People's Coalition to hold special polls in the city.

Even if she accepted the vote of the majority to dismiss the petition, Tancangco said the way the decision was promulgated did not go through the "normal procedure."

Also on Friday, Benipayo released a "summary of votes and certification," which merely ran down the individual votes and opinions of the seven commissioners on the draft resolution that Tancangco had penned.

Tancangco's draft resolution granted the petition filed by losing mayoral candidate Luis "Baby" Asistio to a declaration of failure of elections in the city.

Commissioners Rex Borra, Florentino Tuason, Mehol Sadain and Benipayo himself dissented. But Commissioners Rufino Javier and Ralph Lantion concurred with Tancangco's draft resolution.

Lantion even attached a condition that special elections should be held only on precincts, which did not function on May 14.

With a majority voting against Tancangco's draft resolution, Benipayo then certified the en banc ruling junking the petition to declare a failure of elections in Caloocan City.

But Tancangco said: "In case there are at least four commissioners dissenting, the rule is that the case will be re-raffled off to the new majority and my decision can be converted into a dissenting opinion."

Only then can the Clerk of the Commission promulgate the resolution, which shall become executory after five days unless the Supreme Court issues a temporary restraining order upon a petition by any affected party, Tancangco said.

"This is the normal procedure unless another railroading is in the making," Tancangco said.

Benipayo defended his action, saying it was pursuant to Section 5, Rule 3 of the Comelec Rules of Procedure.

"It was not an abnormal procedure," Benipayo said. "What's wrong is if the commissioners are not allowed to express their views.

"The case must be resolved as soon as possible, and that's the reason why I issued a summary of votes," Benipayo said. "It's just a matter of summing it up and it's just to avoid delay."

Benipayo said if the en banc waited for a new ponente to pen the majority decision and for the dissenting opinion of those in the minority, "God knows when we would resolve this issue."

"Would the votes have changed if their opinions are expressed? I think not, " Benipayo said.

In dismissing Asistio's petition, Benipayo said records of the Comelec showed that all precincts completely functioned and successfully conducted elections in the first and second districts of Caloocan City, hence there is no need to call for a special election.

Tourism wants role in ensuring hotel safety

TOURISM Secretary Richard J. Gordon yesterday said he would ask Malacañang for a memorandum requiring the Depart of Tourism to study safety measures in hotels and lodging houses in coordination with concerned agencies such as local governments and the Bureau of Fire Protection.

"The Department of Tourism will also work with the Philippine National Red Cross to produce a memorandum to train Red Cross volunteers on safety procedures and first aid in the event of hotel fires," Gordon said.

A similar memorandum is being instituted between the DOT and the Red Cross to instruct volunteers in the event of natural disasters like typhoons and floods.

Gordon lamented the failure of many budget hotels to implement fire safety standards in the wake of the Quezon City Manor Hotel fire that killed at least 73 people.

The military bungles again

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

SEN. Loren Legarda called to say she was belligerent toward witness Ador Mawanay, a.k.a. Ador, at the Senate hearing last Friday because he placed her integrity under a cloud.

She said Ador's story that she bought smuggled cell phones from him is "preposterous, a total lie."

"Mon, you have to understand that I was defending my reputation," she said.

* * *

The joint Senate committees looking into the allegations of Col. Victor Corpus, military intelligence chief, against Sen. Panfilo Lacson did not foresee the public outrage over the detention of Ador.

Text messages condemning the fascistic behavior of the senators flew thick and fast Saturday and Sunday.

One text message read: "*Hwag sanang matulad hearing na ito sa* impeachment *kundi magpipol power 4 ang mga tao* (Let's hope this hearing will not go the way of the impeachment otherwise there will be People Power 4."

Another read: "thk u victor corpus—pls pass til dis reaches d senate, congres, judiciary he wil save our childrn & grndchldrn fr evils f drugs lets support his ideals."

* * *

Senator Lacson, former Philippine National Police chief, complains he has not yet received P1.7 million in retirement benefits.

Why should he? The amount is a drop in the ocean compared to the hundreds of millions of dollars in deposits he has with various banks in Hong Kong, Canada and the United States.

That is, I hasten to add, if Corpus' allegations are true.

* * *

Quezon City building officials and those of the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) should be held accountable for the fire at Manor Hotel in Quezon City early Saturday which killed at least 72 hotel guests.

The hotel fire, which came six years after the Ozone Disco fire that killed 162 people, would not have taken place if preventive measures were taken by city building and fire officials.

Fire and building officials were bribed by the hotel's owner so they would gloss over violations of the Fire and Building Codes.

* * *

How come the Quezon City engineer, Alfredo Macapugay, is still around when he should have been kicked out after the Ozone Disco fire?

Answer: Because he probably has a strong backer, like an influential religious sect.

Macapupay was charged before the Sandiganbayan for the Ozone tragedy but the case has yet to be resolved. Another case will surely be filed against him before the anti-graft court.

The joke is that the two cases against Macapugay—for the Ozone and Manor fires—will be resolved after a third case, again for negligence, will have been filed against him.

* * *

The military's fumbling, bungling and clumsy handling of the situation in Mindanao is once again exemplified by the death of two Chinese kidnap victims who were killed during a rescue operation in Sultan Kudarat.

A third kidnap victim escaped during the firefight.

The bungled rescue operation was undertaken by two companies of Army troopers assisted by two MG-520 attack helicopters.

The military should train troops for special operations like rescuing hostages and kidnap victims. The United States military has a special unit dealing with hostage rescue; it's called the Delta Force.

Why doesn't our government ask the United States to have Filipino troops train with Delta Force?

* * *

Foreign countries will no longer send consultants or engineers to the Philippines to build roads, bridges, irrigation facilities and other infrastructure after the Sultan Kudarat incident.

Foreign engineers building roads in the countryside are not only prey to kidnappers, they're also victims of extortion by bandits and communist or Moro rebels.

Korean engineers who built roads in the 1970s were always threatened with bodily harm if they didn't give protection money to or hire persons recommended by the rebels or bandits.

If our government can't protect foreign nationals who are doing business in the Philippines, can you expect it to protect its own citizens?

* * *

President Macapagal was invited to attend the joint 17th anniversary celebration of El Shaddai and birthday celebration of its founder, Mike Velarde.

Velarde was apparently trying to soft soap Macapagal-Arroyo so the plunder case against him would not be filed by the government.

The controversial religious leader allegedly sold billions of pesos worth of real estate to the government using his connections with former President Erap. The real estate was reportedly worth much, much less.

Firemen want NCR . . .

(From page A19)

He said Villafuerte assumed office as NCR Fire Marshal in May 2000.

In his memorandum to Villafuerte, Lemence noted that the Manor Hotel had no automatic fire suppression system and smoke and heat detectors.

Lemence also noted that the hotel's portable fire extinguishers were inadequate and there was a lack of secondary stairs and fire exits. The hotel's standpipe and manual fire alarm systems were also found to be defective while the fire exit routes were obstructed.

"But despite these findings, Villafuerte did not do anything to correct these deficiencies, in violation of a guideline issued by the BFP on June 14, 2000 to all fire marshals, which clearly states regional fire marshals have the authority to review and enforce the Fire Code," Estrada said.

Estrada added that even if Villafuerte could not be held liable for negligence of duty in connection with the Manor Hotel fire, his failure to complete the investigation of the Feb. 22 fire at the Philippine International Convention Center is more than enough reason for the BFP not to appoint him as chief investigator of the Manor Hotel fire.

Estrada said Interior Secretary Jose Lina should form an independent body to investigate the tragic incident. He added only an independent body can be trusted to give impartial results.

The Inquirer tried but failed to reach Villafuerte for comment.

The Manor Hotel fire was reportedly caused by a short circuit at the hotel's karaoke bar located on the third floor. The fire spread rapidly even though it was raining at the time.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, August 21, 2001
20th Week in Ordinary Time

Ist Reading: *Jdg 6:11-24*
Gospel: *Mt 19:23-30*

Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I say to you: it will be hard for one who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. Yes, believe me: it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for the one who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven."

On hearing this the disciples were astonished and said, "Who, then, can be saved?" Jesus looked steadily at them and answered, "For humans it is impossible, but for God all things are possible."

Then Peter spoke up and said, "You see we have given up everything to follow you: what will be our lot?"

Jesus answered, "You who have followed me, listen to my words: on the Day of Renewal, when the Son of Man sits on his throne in glory, you, too, will sit on twelve thrones to rule the twelve tribes of Israel. As for those who have left houses, brothers, sisters, father, mother, children or property for my Name's sake, they will receive a hundredfold and be given eternal life. Many who are now first will be last, and many who are now last will be first."

Commentary

Jesus' demands for entering the kingdom are so high that they make even the disciples exclaim, "Then who can be saved?" At this point Jesus states that for God all things are possible. The reading then continues to disclose what God has in store for those who leave everything for the sake of Jesus and the kingdom. They will be given high positions in the kingdom and will ultimately inherit eternal life. God can not be surpassed in generosity and will reward human commitment a hundred-fold. The reading is a powerful invitation to continue on the way and to discover unexpected and new dimensions of life.

Father, we have the tendency to limit ourselves in life to what is familiar. Give us the faith to go beyond these boundaries and discover the real dimensions of life.

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

CRIMINAL LAW (PERSONS CRIMINALLY LIABLE)—Accomplice— An accomplice is one who, not being a principal, cooperates in the execution of the offense by previous or simultaneous acts. Thus, conviction as an accomplice entails that the accused be aware of the criminal intent of the principal and knowingly or intentionally cooperates with him toward the efficacious execution of the crime. These requirements were not convincingly met in the instant case where there is no indication that accused-appellant knew of the accused-at-large's intent to kill the victim. Moreover, the medical findings of the doctors who testified in this case support the conclusion that the accused-at-large could have accomplished the killing of the victim without the cooperation and assistance of accused-appellant. The victim dies of a serious head injury, brought about by either or both the accused-at-large's fistblows on other parts on the body and the victim's resultant collapse to the ground. Both the doctors opined that fistblows on other parts of the body could not have cause the victim's death. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Gonzaga-Reyes, Third Division, People v. Tilos, G.R. No. 138385, January 16, 2001]

Digest by R.B. Vera

LIFE ON THE ROAD
While her husband sleeps on the ground, a woman does the laundry in the place they call home, on the sidewalk along Edsa, near Main Street, in Quezon City.
EDWIN BACASMAS

Manor owner charged; . . .

(From page A19)

to officials.

'Deficiencies'

Lina said the Sir William hotel's "deficiencies" included "no automatic sprinkler system, no automatic signaling system, no fire drills conducted, insufficient fire hoses, no self-closing doors at fire exit, insufficient automatic emergency lighting, no organized fire brigade, no fire safety inspection certificate, no fire pump, no exit plan installed, no luminous directional exit signs, and wood and plywood partition untreated with fire retardant."

It was not known how the hotel got a business license from the city hall when it had no fire safety inspection certificate, a requirement before the city government could renew the hotel's license every January.

Wencelito T. Andanar, Lina's undersecretary for peace and order, said the deficiencies were discovered after Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) investigators made a surprise visit on Saturday after the Manor Hotel blaze.

Sir William's had also been found violating fire safety regulations in 1999 and 2000, Andanar said.

Lina said the 60-day preventive closure order was imposed so that the hotel management could remedy all the deficiencies.

No comment

Andanar, together with BFP acting director Chief Supt. Francisco S. Senot and several policemen, served the closure order at 3:20 p.m. yesterday.

Sir William's night manager George M. Dumlao, who talked to Andanar at the front desk, refused to sign a copy of the order.

Dumlao declined to give any comment. He also did not admit that Genato owned the hotel.

But he told the INQUIRER that the hotel's last guest checked out Sunday because of the Manor fire.

Andanar ordered Senot to investigate two other establishments in Quezon City that are said to be owned also by Genato.

These are the Wilbec Apartelle in Project 4 and Villa Rebecca Condominium at Tandang Sora. The condominium allegedly does not have a building permit.

Genato's wife is named Rebecca.

One more death

Yesterday morning, the death count rose to 73 after Connie Marasigan, 28, died at the V. Luna Medical Center due to respiratory complications, said Dr. Joseph Bacareza of the BFP emergency medical service.

Tess Cardanao of the Dayao Funeral Homes said only three victims-two men and a woman-remain unidentified.

She said Evangeline Bayongobong, 25; Marie Cabuatan, 23; Sharon Paguitodol, 22; Solidad, 28; Rudy Bagiw Jr., 22; Josue Dasalla; Wendy Managtag, 22; Ernie de los Reyes, 47; and Elpidio Sagaoinit, 46; were identified yesterday.

Stabilizing

The Department of Health announced that the condition of 28 survivors of the Manor Hotel fire has started to stabilize.

The DOH Health Emergency Management Staff reported that all 20 patients brought to the Lung Center of the Philippines, Metropolitan Hospital and East Avenue Medical Center have been adequately treated.

The staff said most of the survivors were treated for acute respiratory failure as a result of suffocation. They are now reportedly on the road to recovery.

The eight other survivors, who were brought to the AFP Medical Center on V. Luna Road in Quezon City, were treated for suffocation, fractures, abrasions, head and burn injuries.

The report on the fate of 11 other survivors, who were brought to the Quezon City Medical Center, had not reached the DOH as of yesterday. ***With reports from Norman Bordadora, TJ Burgonio***

'Let not . . .

(From page A19)

tion of electrical wires.

Jung said his ministry lost two pastors and missionaries, one of whom was assigned to China like De Castro, a former court stenographer.

Maglambayan, an elementary public school teacher, left behind 65 students whom she considered her children, said her sister Emerita Pineda.

About 100 other teenagers in her Sunday mission school will miss Maglambayan, Pineda added.

Firemen found the Mangacu couple locked in an embrace in their death. They left behind three children.

Teresa, Sagcal's widow, said she does not know how to fend for their three children, aged 6, 4, and 2.

But even in their grief, relatives of the victims are clear about seeking justice.

"Kailangang managot sila (They should be held liable," said Pineda, a city health worker, referring to the hotel owner, the Quezon City fire department and engineer's office.

"Why did they allow the hotel owner to continue violating safety standards?" Pineda asked. "Why did they allow a year to pass without the owner complying?"

The P150,000 in compensation reportedly promised by the hotel management to close relatives of the victims would not be enough, she said.

"Lives were lost," Teresa Sagcal said. "Money can't take the place of our loved ones."

"Many lives were lost," Pineda said. "There was obvious negligence."

Eva Garcia, De Castro's sister, also expressed hope that the deaths would "not be taken for granted so there would not be a repeat of the tragedy."

"My sister worked in court for many years, helping dispense justice," Garcia said. "Let justice be (given to her) and to the other victims."

Share Mangacu, 13, the Mangacus' daughter, made the same appeal. "Dapat idemanda ang mga nagpabaya (Those who have been negligent should be sued)."

Beautician found dead

BY JEROME ANING

A 40-YEAR-OLD gay beautician was found dead in his house in Sampaloc, Manila before dawn yesterday.

The Western Police District's homicide section, however, has yet to rule whether Alberto Lastimosa died of natural causes, foul play or suicide.

Investigator PO3 Joselito de Ocampo reported the death as "under inquiry."

Police said Lastimosa, a native of Davao City, was found dead in his house on V. Cruz Street about 3 a.m. by a neighbor, Juan Guevarra.

Guevarra 63, a former barangay chair, told police he found clotted blood in the victim's nostrils.

Police will conduct an autopsy on the remains of the victim for the presence of poison.

The body was taken to the Tres Amigos Funeral Home in Paco.

Guevarra told PO3 De Ocampo that he was on his way to get water from the community artesian pump and passed by Lastimosa's residence when he spotted through an open window, the victim lying still on the floor clad in white shirt and underwear.

Guevarra and other neighbors forced their way into Lastimosa's house and found the victim no longer breathing. They called the police.

Dorothy Esma, another neighbor, told the investigator she last saw the victim about 9 p.m. Sunday watching other residents celebrate their barangay fiesta.

Police learned from other neighbors that Lastimosa and his male companion, identified only as Toti, parted ways about three weeks ago.

Woman dies after jumping from jeep being held up

BY PHILIP C. TUBEZA

PABLINA Manungsong panicked when robbers held up the passenger jeepney she was riding on Sunday night in Quezon City.

She jumped off the speeding vehicle, landed on her head, cracked her skull and died, police said.

Ironically, Manungsong, of Barangay 4, Mayamot, Antipolo City, had already told the jeepney driver she wanted to get off at the corner of 15th Street Aurora Boulevard, Cubao, Quezon City, when the unidentified suspects announced the holdup about 7 p.m., Central Police District investigators reported yesterday.

When the suspects announced the holdup, the driver of the Cubao-bound jeepney continued to drive, not minding Manungsong's plea to get off, said a member of the CPD's Criminal Investigation Unit.

Police said Manungsong apparently panicked and she jumped off the jeepney. Unfortunately, she landed on her head and cracked her skull.

A commotion ensued inside the jeepney after the victim jumped. The driver stopped and many of the passengers, including the robbers, quickly got off.

Manungsong was taken to the Quirino Memorial Medical Center where doctors pronounced her dead, police said.

Investigators are now trying to find witnesses who might lead them to the suspects.

Taxi falls in ravine; old man killed, 14 injured

BY AGNES DONATO

A 64-YEAR-OLD man was killed while 14 others were injured when the Tamaraw FX taxi they were riding in fell in a ravine after it was bumped from behind by a van in Marikina City.

Leonardo Lubosana, of Urban Bliss, Barangay Barangka, died on the spot, police said.

Injured were Francisco Ramos Borromeo, 25, Estrella Ramos General, 28, Jasmin Tejones, 20, Jessica Ramos, 16, Hector Tabuzo, 39, Dino Sinuta, 28, Felix Padroga, 31, Nane Warner, 21, Elden Andolano, 23, Rico Tero, 29, Nicanor Lejo, 17, Sheirma Lozano, 25, and Rolando Tagarino, 45, driver of the FX taxi.

They were taken to the Amang Rodriguez Memorial Hospital for treatment.

Police said Tagarino stopped his FX taxi (PVR 381) to unload a passenger on Major Dizon Street about 9:15 p.m., when Rodel Ramos, 31, driving a KIA Ceres Dropside van (UAW 731), hit the rear of the FX.

Both vehicles were on their way to Antipolo City, police said.

The force of the collision was enough to push the taxi into the ravine—right on top of a Metro Rail Transit construction site, police said.

Ramos was unhurt but his four cousins, who were also his passengers, were among those injured.

Thieves in wigs nabbed in Malabon

BY CHRISTIAN V. ESGUERRA

POLICE on Sunday foiled a robbery attempt by three armed men wearing wigs in Malabon City.

A team from the Northern Police District mobile unit arrested Adrian Rosas, 33, Roger Fajardo, 22, both residents of Merville in Parañaque, and Marcelo Castillo, 57, in Gozon Compound, Tonsuya, Malabon, as they were about to rob an establishment in northern Manila, police said.

During interrogation, the suspects told police they wore wigs, to hide their identities during the robberies.

The suspects were also found with a 12-gauge shotgun, a .38 revolver, a pillbox, and a toy .45 pistol.

Police have filed charges of illegal possession of firearms and deadly weapons against the suspects.

The Malabon prosecutor's office recommended a combined amount of P142,000 for the suspects' temporary release.

MOPC forum

OMBUDSMAN Aniano A. Desierto will present updates on various controversial cases currently handled by the Office of the Ombudsman during the regular press forum of the Manila Overseas Press Club on Thursday from 12 noon to 2 p.m. at the Century Park Hotel, Manila.

After his preliminary statements during the press forum, Desierto would entertain questions from foreign and local media and from the audience.

Former Press Secretary Hector R. Villanueva, MOPC president; and Johnny Dayang, chair of the MOPC Press Forum, will lead MOPC officers and governors in welcoming guests and Ombudsman Desierto, the special guest of honor and speaker.

Other MOPC Officers are Abelardo L. Yabot Sr., chair emeritus; Antonio S. Lopez, vice president; Larry J. Cruz, secretary; Exequiel B. Garcia, treasurer; Virgilio Q. Pantaleon, auditor; Adrian Cristobal, Elpi O. Cuna, Jr., Nelia T. Gonzales, Aida Sevilla Mendoza, Cipriano S. Roxas, Emmanuel T. Santos, and Antonio D. Seva, governors.

The public may participate in the MOPC Press Forum. For further information and reservation, contact Dena at tel. No. 5231266.

Pasig factory's fumes kill housewife, down 30 other residents

BY AGNES DONATO

A 54-YEAR-OLD housewife died while 30 others, including a 2-year-old boy, were hospitalized after toxic fumes reportedly leaked from a fertilizer manufacturing plant in Pasig City on Sunday night.

Police identified the fatality as Ana Cahindi, of Salandanan Street, Malasaga, Barangay Pinagbuhatan, Pasig. Cahindi died at the Pasig City General Hospital, two hours after she complained of difficulty in breathing.

The youngest victim was 2-year-old Oliver Aliora, of Purok 6, Barangay Pinagbuhatan.

Supt. John Sosito, local police chief, said at least 30 people from the nearby villages of Maguila, Alegro, Doña Aurora, Purok 6, and Kalawaan, all in Barangay Pinagbuhatan, were taken to the hospital for allegedly inhaling them toxic fumes.

Out of the 30 victims, Jasmine Ann Asuncion, 4, and Michael Soriano, 22, were the only ones advised to stay in the hospital for further observation.

Sosito said the poisonous emission came from the sulfuric acid plant of LMG Chemicals Corporation on Eliseo Road, Kalawaan.

In a statement, Chemphil Group board chair Antonio Garcia said that operation of the plant was stopped on Friday for repairs and resumed late Sunday afternoon.

Garcia admitted a problem occurred in the plant's sulfur feed at 7:15 p.m., adding that management was forced to immediately shut down the plant.

But Garcia claimed "none of the plant personnel complained or suffered from respiratory inconvenience," contrary to the reported effect the noxious emission had on Barangay Pinagbuhatan residents.

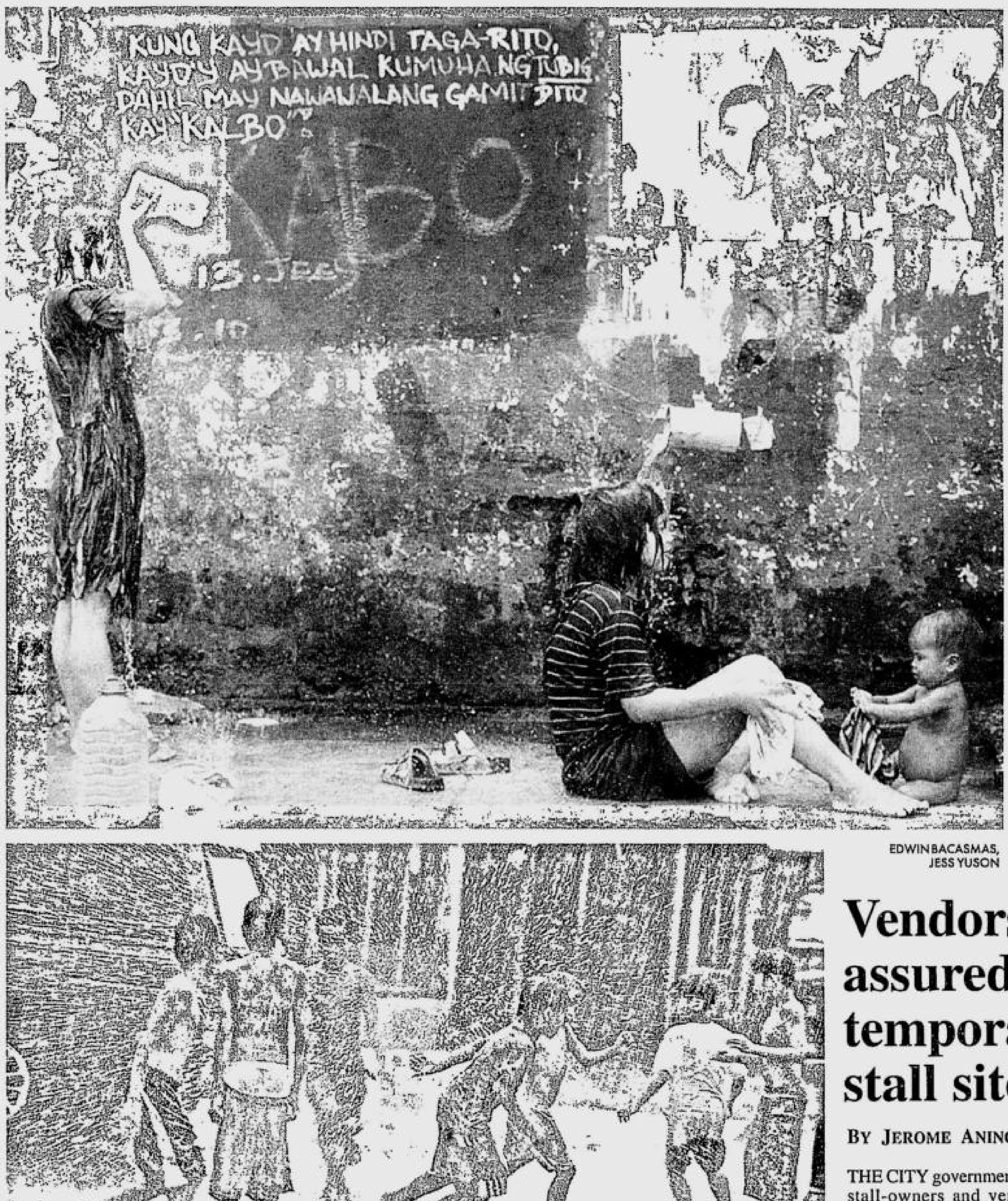
"LMG regrets this unfortunate incident and is doing all it can to assist the residents in whatever way it can," Garcia said in the statement.

However, members of a farmer's group claimed that noxious fumes from the chemical plant caused the destruction of their crops.

Felix Tajan, former president of the group "Magsasaka ng Pasig," said that the plant had long been emitting fumes, which destroyed their crops.

Months ago, the Laguna Lake Development Authority and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources found in a joint study that the plant had been operating allegedly without the necessary anti-pollution device.

City Mayor Soledad Eusebio has formed a task force on air quality and industrial pollution to look into the matter.


KUNG KAYO AY HINDI TAGA-RITO,
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DAHIL MAY NAWAWALANG GAMIT DITO
KAY "KALBO".
KALBO
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PUBLIC BATHS

Children on the streets know how to make do with what is available. A woman and children bathe with water from a leaking pipe in Balintawak, Quezon City, while other children take advantage of the rain on Ponte Street in Makati City (below).

EDWIN BACASMAS, JESS YUSON

Vendors assured of temporary stall site

BY JEROME ANING

THE CITY government has assured stall-owners and vendors at the Sampaloc Market in Manila of a temporary site while a new marketplace is being constructed for them.

Tina Testa, adviser of the Bagong Samahan ng mga Maninida sa Sampaloc Market Inc., on Friday said that they met last Tuesday with Deogracias Tablan Jr., the city's flagship projects overseer and urban settlements chief.

Testa said Tablan promised a relocation area to house the market's 150 stall-owners as soon as possible.

The old market on Legarda Street in Sampaloc will be demolished to make way for a station of the Light Rail Transit 2, which will stretch from Tondo to Pasig City.

The site of the old market was sold to the LRT Authority for P151 million last year, while City Hall acquired two lots across the street as the future site of the new market.

But in the next few months, the BSMSMI consistently defied City Hall's repeated orders to vacate the old market until the new one is constructed. They only acquiesced after the mayor promised to construct a temporary site for them where they can continue their trade while the new market is being finished.

"Architect Tablan showed us the design of the temporary site and we found it acceptable, but expect City Hall to fulfill what it promised us—a new market," Testa said.

Off-track betting station robbed

BY JEROME ANING

AT LEAST three armed men held up an off-site horserace betting station in Paco, Manila Sunday night, disarming a policeman who happened to be in the area and stealing about P100,000 in cash and valuables.

The suspects, who were on board a gray Toyota FX (TAX-650), stormed the Happy Land Off-Track Betting Station and the adjoining Arlon's Café on Pedro Gil Street about 8:45 p.m., according to Chief Insp. Eduardo Cruz of the city police theft and robbery section.

One of the men was armed with a baby Armalite (M-16) rifle while another had a .45-caliber pistol. The third drove the getaway vehicle, police said.

Witnesses told police there could have been a fourth man who acted as the lookout.

The gunmen broke up the bettors' queue, declared a holdup and ordered Sonia Estacio, 45, one of the tellers on duty, to surrender the station's earnings. The amount of the stolen cash was later pegged at P43,420, according to investigator PO3 Rodolfo de los Reyes.

The suspects also disarmed PO3 Albert Domingo, 32, of the Eastern Police District and detailed to the office of San Juan Mayor Joseph Victor Ejercito.

Naia passengers losing things to detectors

BY TJ BURGONIO

WHAT'S with metal detectors at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport?

Of late, some passengers reportedly just lose personal things after walking through the detectors.

A day after a Japanese lost his watch after placing it in a tray and walking through a metal detector, a young woman yesterday also lost her cellular phone in much the same way.

Joeyce Magbitang, 18, who checked in the morning for her flight to Iloilo, placed her Nokia 8250 cell phone in a plastic tray and went through the walk-through metal detector at the Naia terminal 2.

She was surprised to find her cell phone gone from the tray as soon as she stepped out of the metal detector.

A staff member of the Philippine Airlines, who was then manning the metal detector and X-ray machine at the terminal's departure area, said he never saw anybody take the cell phone.

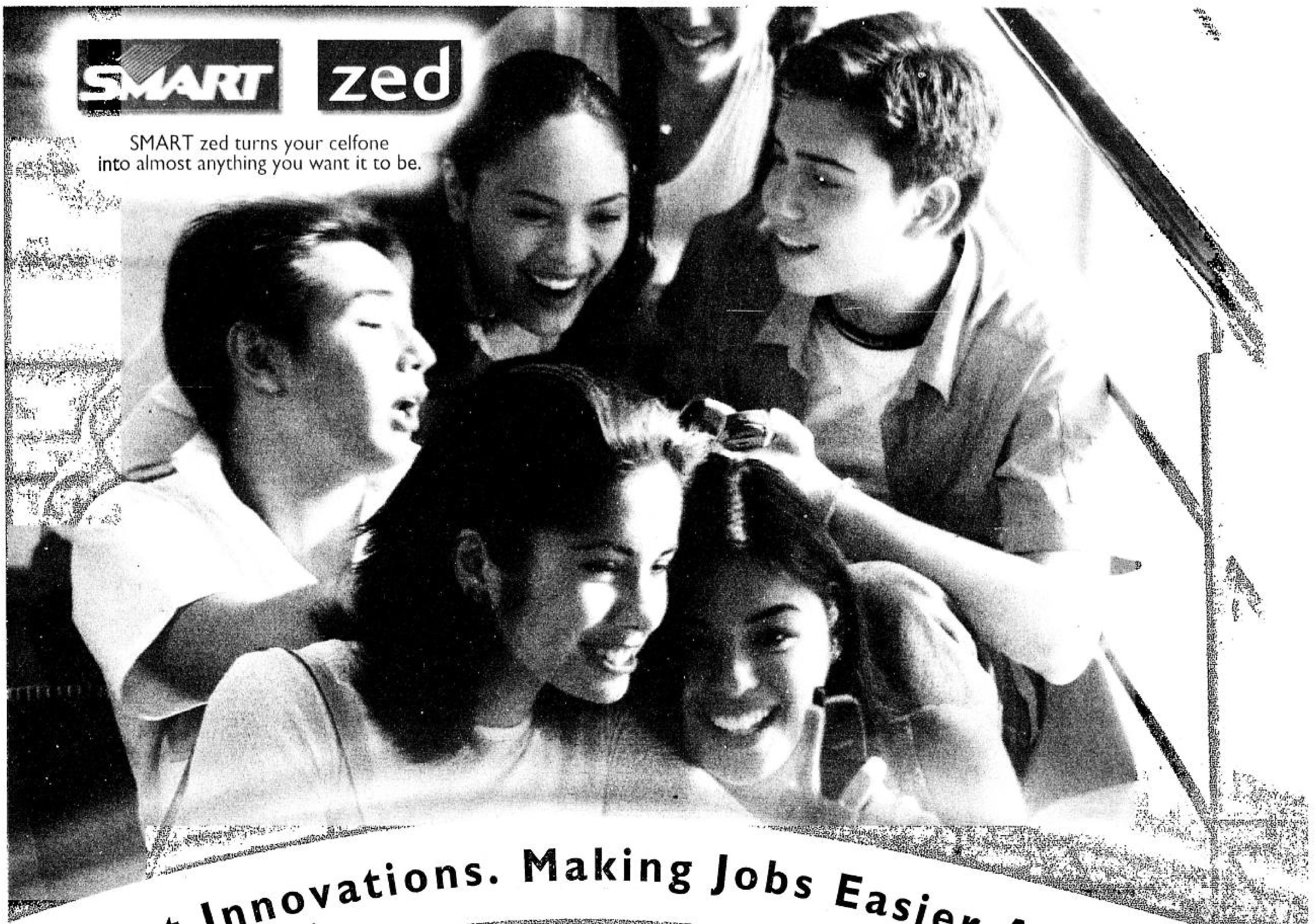
A close-circuit TV installed in the area is not yet operational, according to police.

On Sunday, Sato Hitoshi lost his Seiko watch worth P30,000 at the Naia I under the same circumstances: He removed the watch, placed it in the tray and then walked through the metal detector (not X-ray machine as earlier reported). Afterward, he found his watch missing from the tray.

A review of the CCTV tapes that same day showed a non-uniformed female personnel of the Aviation Security Group approaching the tray, picking up something from it and pocketing it while a male colleague was frisking Hitoshi.

The two security personnel have yet to be investigated.

The Airport Police Department is looking into the involvement of personnel manning the metal detector and X-ray machines in the pre-departure areas in both cases.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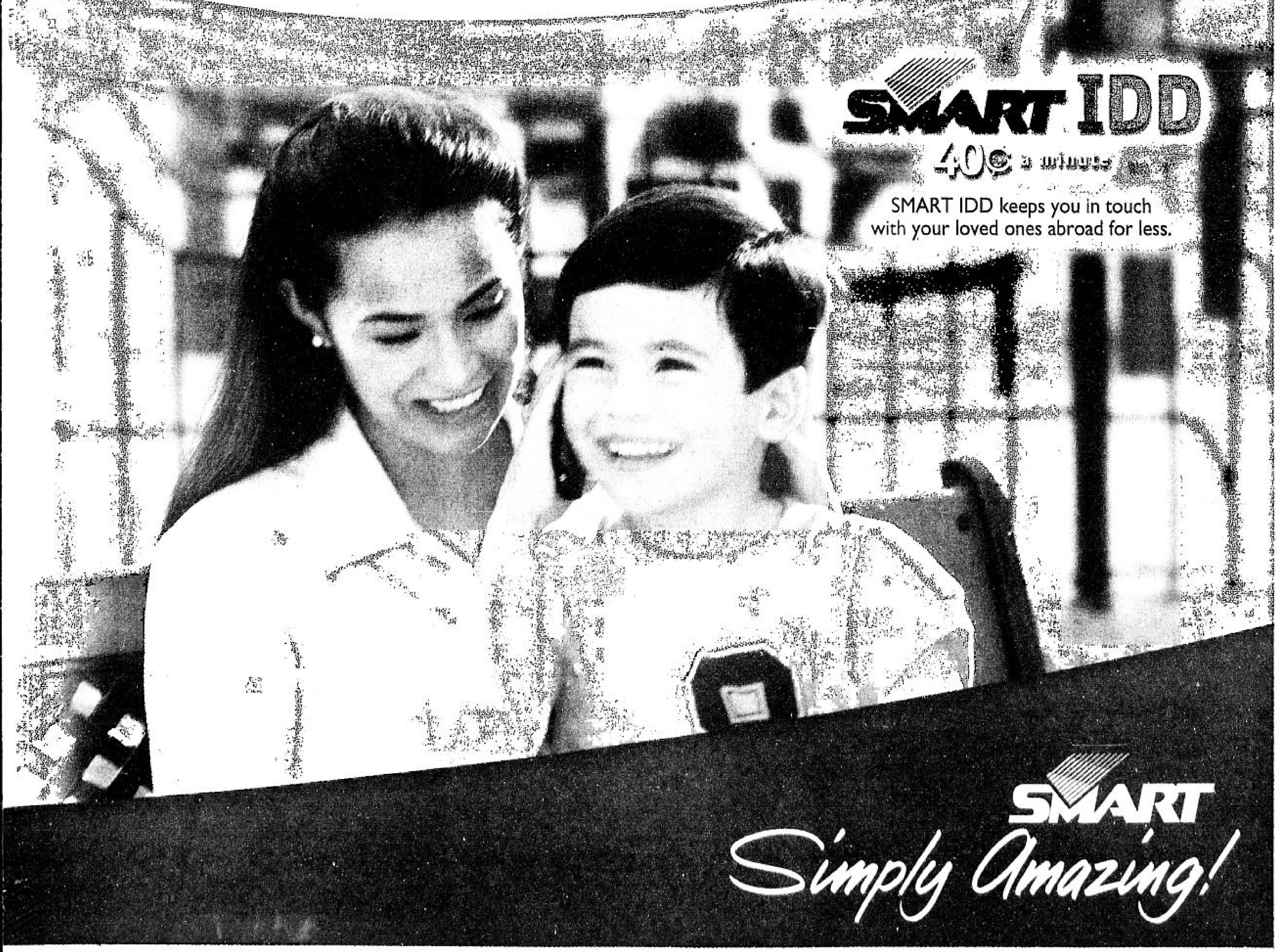

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5	RESERVE
6	VENUS

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ALI MALL CINEPLEX-2	VENUS
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-3 (DDS)	THE ANIMAL
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-4 (SDDS)	PLANET OF THE APES
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	PLANET OF THE APES
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	KISS OF THE DRAGON
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7 (DOLBY)	SCREAM... FRIDAY THE 13TH
FARMERS PLAZA-1 (DOLBY)	STICKMEN
FARMERS PLAZA-2 (DOLBY)	PLANET OF THE APES
FIESTA CARNIVAL	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
NEW FRONTIER	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	BALAHIBONG PUSA/ BODY TO BODY
ODEON	PLANET OF THE APES
ODEON-2	TURN ON
ROBEN	VENUS DIOSA NG KARAGATAN
TANDEM-1	TURN ON
TANDEM-2	PARU PARONG LIGAW
TIMES	WOMAN ON TOP/ VALENTINE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	CLOSED
ACT-4	CLOSED
CORONET-2	COOL DUDES
QUEZON-1	VENUS DIOSA NG KARAGATAN
REMAR	PLANET OF THE APES
REMAR-2	VENUS DIOSA NG KARAGATAN
CUBAO	
OCEAN SUPERAMA	BABAENG PUTIK
OCEAN CINEMA-A	PANABLA
OCEAN CINEMA-B	CRISELDA
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	PLANET OF THE APES
CINEMA-2	BRITISH FILM FESTIVAL
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	RADYO
CINEMA-2	RED DIARIES
CINEMA-3	BRIDGET JONE'S DIARY
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	PLANET OF THE APES
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	KISS OF THE DRAGON
CINEMA-6	MOULIN ROUGE
CINEMA-7	JURASSIC PARK 3
CINEMA-8	VENUS
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	PLANET OF THE APES
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	PLANET OF THE APES
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	THE ANIMAL
CINEMA-12	SCREAM LAST FRIDAY THE 13TH
CINEMA-14	STICKMEN
CINEMA-15	COOL DUDES
LORES	
CINEMA-2	CLOSED
CINEMA-3	CLOSED
POWER PLANT CINEMA	
CINEMA-1	THE ANIMAL
CINEMA-2	MOULIN ROUGE
CINEMA-3	PLANET OF THE APES
CINEMA-4	PLANET OF THE APES
CINEMA-5	PLANET OF THE APES
CINEMA-6	BRIDGET JONE'S DIARY
UNIWIDE METROMALL	
(LAS PINAS)	
CINEMA-1	RESERVE
CINEMA-2	RESERVE
CINEMA-4	RESERVE
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	
CINEMA-1	UOD SA LAMAN
CINEMA-2	WALANG LUPANG TATAPAKAN
CINEMA-4	ITAKWIL MAN AKO NG LANGIT

MATURAN. Special guest performer.

Amateur singing contest

MAKATI City Mayor Jejomar C. Binay and Councilor Rudy Sese, Liga ng mga Barangay president, will award the prizes to the winners of the "Kundiman sa Makati," Aug. 22, 3 p.m. at the Francisco Santiago Hall, Equitable PCIBank Tower I bldg., Makati Ave., corner H.V. de la Costa st.

"Kundiman sa Makati" is an amateur singing contest and is part of the city's program of promoting and reviving the appreciation for traditional music.

It also discovers talents who are inclined to Filipino music and is enhanced and developed by the city government through events like this.

To encourage their active role and instigate appreciation for traditional music, barangays and schools are invited to send in participants to represent their communities and schools.

"Kundiman sa Makati" is mounted by the Museum and Cultural Affairs Office of the city government, with the barangay captains, councilors, Sangguniang Kabataan and the Makati Youth Council as co-promoters.

This year's special guest performers are Diomedes Maturan and Alexis Edralin.

Emcee is PTV 4 newscaster Chi-Chi Fajardo Robles.

Prizes at stake are P10,000 for the champion, P7,000 for the first runner-up and P5,000 for second runner-up. Non-winners will receive P5,000 each.

The sponsor barangay or school of the champion will receive P7,000 in cash for their cultural programs.

Jazz concert

CITY Lite 88.3, presents Richard Merk in "Jazz in the City," a jazz concert at 9 p.m. on Aug. 22 and 29 at Monk's Dream, Jupiter st., Bel-Air, Makati City.

Guest artists are saxophonist Tots Tolentino (Aug. 22) and Jacqui Magno (Aug. 29).

For inquiries, call 631-8803.

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August 21 - Tuesday
5:45 PM - Planet of the Apes
8:15 PM - CLOSED (LRP Foundation/ El Phils.)
10:45 PM - Planet of the Apes

SHREK
opens Wednesday Aug. 22

GET a copy of the 4th issue of Pelikula! Pelikula: A Journal of Philippine Cinema is one of the beneficiary projects of the LRP Foundation, published jointly with the U-P College of Mass Communication. Special discounts given to Louie's THX members.

Hear the Difference, Feel the Excitement

Parking attendants frustrate Robin's plans for dinner for 2

COULD it be true that the parking lot attendants at a five-star hotel did not recognize **Robin Padilla** so that after he was made to wait, Binoe just drove off and didn't use the room he had reserved?

Binoe wanted to have a quiet dinner for two in the suite with his special lady friend. Since the dinner didn't materialize, he took the girl to Power Plant instead.

DOLLYWOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

Binoe's wife **Liezl** has no reason to be alarmed, though. All of Binoe's earnings go directly to her and their kids in Australia. Needless to say that's backed with Binoe's full emotional investment as well.

Sinister plots

WHAT could be the motive behind the sinister plots against three of the biggest stars in show biz lately?

Vilma Santos and **Nora Aunor** have been receiving death threats. A masked man entered the bedroom of **Sharon Cuneta**'s daughter **KC** while the girl was asleep.

Reigning supreme can really lead to extremes. Hero worship has some harmful side effects.

Guess list

FOR the longest time, this show biz couple seemed like one of the few lucky ones whose marriage would never crumble. But what's this I heard that they have already broken up because the guy prefers make-up to making out with his wife? Wonder if his homosexual tendencies are latent, or was the actor just influenced by the artistic circle he works in?

A young dramatic star is so peeved with a young matinee idol because he got her boyfriend (son of a singer/host) hooked on Ecstacy. That's nothing to be ecstatic about.

Freestyle does it again

THERE'S no stopping Freestyle. **Nikki, Gerald, Carlo, Jinky, Top** and **Tat** bested other top local bands in the Best Major Concert-Group Category in the recent Aliw Awards. Not resting on their laurels, Freestyle continued their winning streak in a sold-out all-hits concert at the Big Dome.

The concert is set to be staged in Cebu on Sept. 15 at the Waterfront Cebu City Hotel with fellow hitmaker **Ogie Alcasid** as special guest. Tickets available at SM Cebu and at Waterfront.

Reader's corner

"BILLY" (of the PLDT commercial) got my attention after he appeared in 'Larawan' with **Pops Fernandez**. He's definitely cute as a young guy in love with an older woman. What a combi! They looked good on TV, and Pops seemed to be comfortable with a *bagets* . . . Uyyy . . .

"Hope they can do another Pops and 'Billy' teamup."—**Michaela Santos**

"Last night, after a dose of 'Pangako sa Iyo,' I stumbled upon 'ASAP' while waiting for the 'The Buzz,' which is my favorite Filipino TV program on the The Filipino Channel here in California.

"What caught my ire after is the show called ASAP in which ABS-CBN invested too much of programming time.

What is in ASAP anyway? . . . We are fed up with what ASAP shows us, the subscribing public, because here abroad we have all the entertainment similar to what is shown in ASAP. Allow me to say that ASAP is just a copycat of what is being shown abroad.

"Can't the Philippine entertainment business be creative? We have the most talented performers around the globe.

The best! I guess many Filipinos . . . want a show that depicts Filipino culture, a show that is very Filipino in nature. The original Filipino sounds and dances are great."—**Amy Yaesha**, California.

For feedback, e-mail wateringhole 2000@yahoo.com

CAMPUS SHOW
Barbie's Cradle will rock some of Manila's campuses as they continue their tour to promote their latest CD, "Music from the Buffet Table." The group will perform at 7 tonight at the Bahay ng Alumni in UP Diliman. Other performances are on Aug. 25 at the Mapua Institute of Technology Gym, Sept. 7 at Quad 2 of Ateneo de Manila University and Sept. 21 at the William Shaw Theater of De La Salle University. For inquiries, call 561-7606. Barbie's Cradle is composed of Barbie Almabis on lead vocals, guitar, harmonica and piano, with Rommel de la Cruz on bass and vocals and Wendell Garcia on drums.

POWER PLANT CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41 DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

THE ANIMAL - P 13 12:45, 2:55, 5:05, 7:15,.9:30	MOULIN ROUGE - P 13 12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00	PLANET OF THE APES - P 13 12:20, 2:45, 5:10, 7:35, 10:00
PLANET OF THE APES - P 13 11:40, 2:05, 4:30, 6:55, 9:20	PLANET OF THE APES - P 13 11:00, 1:25, 3:50, 6:15, 8:40	BRIDGET JONE'S DIARY - P 13 11:20, 1:20, 3:40, 5:50, 8:00, 10:10

Matinee: P80, Mon.-Fri. 11:10 am to 4:45 pm Screenings, Free Seating.

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Teenage Seduction
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She'll do anything if she thinks you're watching
NOMOTO MIHO
Between innocence and evil lies the seduction
Sex MEDUSA
THE SEDUCTRESS
CARRY NG VINCENT WAN XU JIN JIANG LEUNG TANG
Directed By:

Mowelfund holds filmmaking workshop

STARTING Aug. 27, an intensive four-month film production workshop will be held at the Mowelfund Film Institute.

The country's top short filmmakers will come together to impact their knowledge and expertise in various discipline such as directing, cinematography, assistant directing, production management, editing, sound and production design.

Mowelfund is headed by internationally acclaimed film director Nick Deocampo.

Application is ongoing. For more information, call 723-4058 or 727-1915.

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CAMERON DIAZ as PRINCESS FIONA
Everyone's PRINCESS. Crush of the whole town, but Kung-Fu expert ala Charlie's Angels. Will her heart melt with Shrek?
EDDIE MURPHY as DONKEY
The great SIDEKICK who's super naughty & haughty. But super LOYAL thru thick & thin.
KIDS, TEENS, MOMS and DADS! HERE COMES SHREK!

united international pictures
VIVA
OPENS AUGUST 22!

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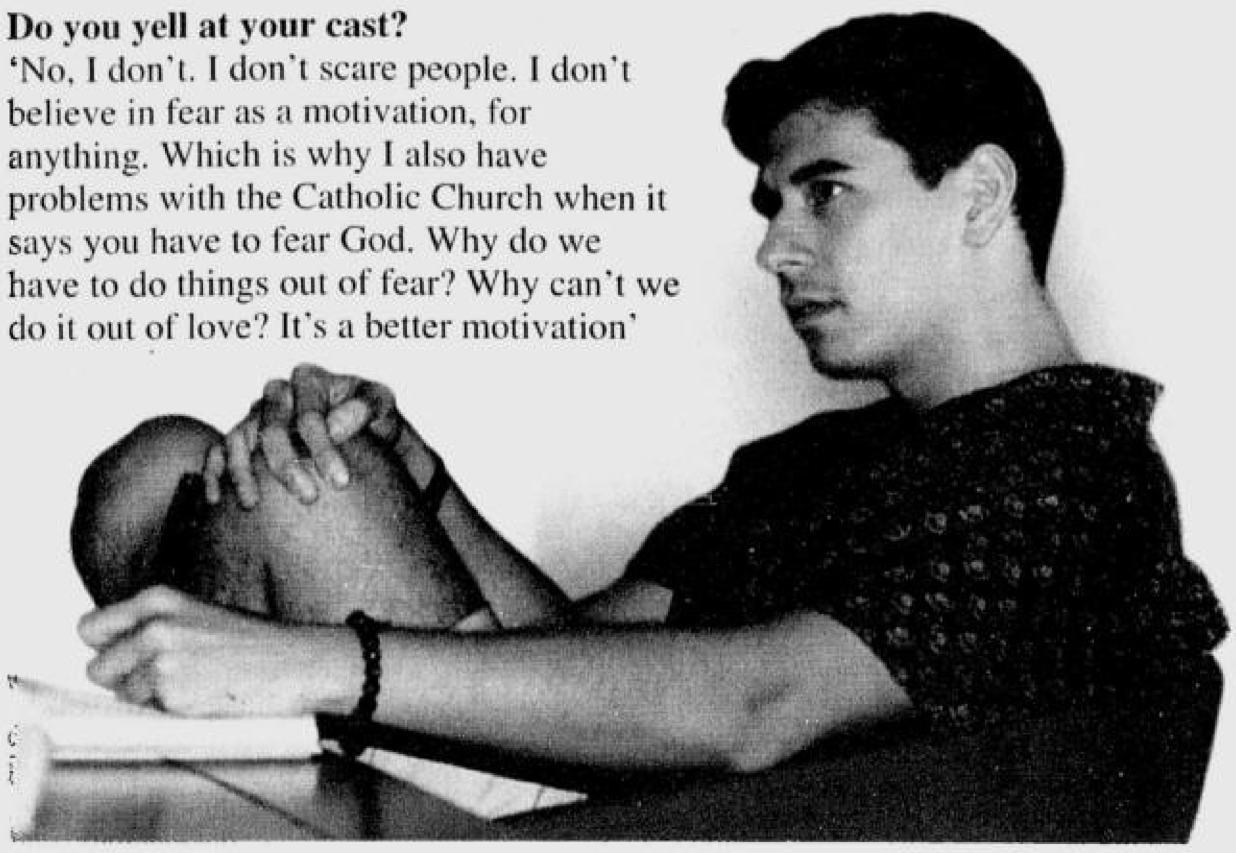
LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

Curtains up. Enter Bobby Garcia. Applause



Do you yell at your cast?

'No, I don't. I don't scare people. I don't believe in fear as a motivation, for anything. Which is why I also have problems with the Catholic Church when it says you have to fear God. Why do we have to do things out of fear? Why can't we do it out of love? It's a better motivation'

Q & A

ONE of the great mysteries in Philippine entertainment is that many Filipinos have not seen the works of theater director Bobby Garcia who has achieved what other people twice his age have been trying all their life to start doing.

Just 31, Garcia of the movie star looks has directed for the local theater Broadway plays and musicals, including the latest interpretation of "Angels in America," "How I Learned to Drive," "Jesus Christ Superstar," and "Rent" in Manila as well as in Singapore. He was also the resident director of the Manila production of "Miss Saigon."

In the United States, he was assistant director of "Dogeaters," based on Jessica Hagedorn's novel of the same title. In Canada, he directed "Cabaret."

The ambitious young director, who looks up to Steven Spielberg as his biggest influence, is also at the helm of the currently-showing rock musical, "Hedwig and the Angry Inch," presented by his own theater outfit, Atlantis Productions. It runs until Sept. 1, after which he will direct a repeat of his very successful "Rent," to start showing in October at the GSIS Theater.

Next year, Garcia will direct Lea Salonga in the dramatic play "Proof," which he will also produce.

Garcia's dream is to create an original musical, "one that will be remembered for a long time."

Filipinos should be part of making that dream come true.

What's keeping you busy now?

We are currently staging an off-Broadway rock musical, "Hedwig and the Angry Inch," at the PCI Bank Building in Makati. It's written by Cameron Mitchell and it's the hilarious story of an internationally ignored glam rocker who experienced a botched sexual operation.

I'm also writing an original musical with Wolfgang, whom I worked with in "Jesus Christ Superstar." It's "Brier Rose" and it is based on the Sleeping Beauty legend, but we're updating it for the rock scene. We'll probably spend the year writing it, then we will audition talents. We are going to have a big search for the girl who will play the lead.

Why Sleeping Beauty, why not Cinderella or Snow White?

Sleeping Beauty is a legend that is very interesting to me. When we were conceptualizing, we thought, what's a fairy tale that's easily adaptable to a local setting? Sleeping Beauty was so perfect for a musical because one of the gifts the three fairies gifted her with is a beautiful voice.

You directed the last half of the "Miss Saigon" production in Manila. Was it more challenging than the previous musicals you've directed?

It's such a big show, technically, and with the number of people you had to deal with, almost 50 people, plus the crew, it required a lot of attention and time.

I handled Ima Castro, who alternated with Ces Campos as Kim. Ima learned the part of Kim in one week.

Can you compare her to Lea?

It's hard to compare all the girls who played Kim to Lea, because she's the original Kim. But Ima's voice is so powerful and her acting is so truthful. It will really move you. When she sings "Movie in My Mind," she really cries. It's true for her because she's a girl from the province and she can probably relate to what's happening to Kim. I really find her spectacular.

You also did "Rent" in Singapore.

We were there last February at the Victoria Theater, where Lea Salonga did "Into the Woods" several years back. Some actors came from Singapore, but most of the cast members were from Manila. JM Rodriguez and Calvin Millado, who did "Rent" at the Music Museum, joined the Singapore production. Rachel Alejandro, Anna Fegi and Ampy Sieteroyales were also with us.

You had a falling out with Monique Wilson's New Voice Company after staging "Rent" at the Music Museum. Will you still work with them?

I have no desire and intention of working with them again.

What if they reach out?

That part of my life is over and I've moved on and I don't want to go back. I just treat it as a lesson for me. Things are going great for me right now. Good luck to them.

Did you really imagine yourself being in theater?

Directing, not acting. There's so much preparation in terms of acting.

Was that your dream as a kid?

Yes. The first time I fell in love with theater was when I was 3 or 4 years old, when my parents took me to Rizal Theater to see "Peter Pan." Everyday, they had to take me during the week because I would insist. Since then, I fell in love with film and theater.

Then they took me to London to see "The King and I" with Yul Brynner. After the show, I knew I really loved theater.

My mom introduced me into the arts. She took me to theater, films, museums. My father, Bob Garcia, has been in communication all his life. He used to own a radio station and worked in Times Journal before Edsa I.

Who are your influences?

Steven Spielberg. I think he's brilliant. The way he tells a story is great. In theater, it's Julie Taymor, the director of "Lion King" on Broadway. She's not really new, she's been around for a long time in non-profit theater. "Lion King" was just her first big Broadway show.

Do you think you have it in you to be like them?

I don't know. It's so hard to try to put yourself out when you are the person. I have ambition to just do good works.

You want to be world famous and respected?

I think you can only be world-respected if your work is really good so what you should focus on is making your work as good as possible and that will get you further.

What I'm constantly preoccupied with is trying my best to push myself further in the work I do and make my work better each time.

How many plays have you directed?

I don't really keep track, but I think it's over 20. I also direct for TV. I direct "Private Conversations with Boy Abunda" on ANC.

What's your most unsatisfying work?

I don't know that I have done a show that I feel wasn't good. It's a personal thing. You put so much of yourself into the project and then you assess it if it's worthwhile or not. Every project I've done has been worthwhile.

Everything you do, there are good and bad things about it. But in the end, when you look at it, you can tell if it was just a waste of your time or you failed to communicate something to the audience. So far, I haven't felt like that toward any project or show.

What does Boy Abunda do for you?

He manages me. He gets me work. He's my friend. He helps me out when I have problems, whether personal or professional. He's a confidant and adviser. Everything that's been going on with my life, Boy Abunda knows.

What can you say about the present condition of Philippine theater?

Despite the dwindling economy, I don't think Philippine theater will ever die. I don't think anything will kill theater, not just in the Philippines but all over the world.

We may not get to see anything like "Miss Saigon" again here for a very, very long time, a musical of that magnitude and scale.

But you know what I'm hopping the dwindling peso would do? I want it to encourage Filipinos to create original works because it's very expensive to get rights and do plays from abroad. It will be cheaper for us to produce original plays and we don't have to pay the exorbitant royalties, with the exchange rate now.

But Filipinos still prefer to watch foreign shows?

Absolutely. I do that. I produce and direct foreign shows. But it's about giving them a diversity, a foreign show and an original show. The reason a place like Broadway flourishes is because of all the different things you can watch—a musical, a thriller, a drama, comedy—all in one night. That makes it so exciting.

But Manila is far from being Broadway?

I know that. But the one thing "Miss Saigon" has shown us is that we have an audience. Two thousand people came every night. We were sold out through Lea's run. Three months, eight performances a week.

Are you strict as a director?

My patience is long. But when I get mad, I also get mad for a very long time. Like when I got mad at Calvin Millado in the middle of the run of "Rent." One night, he came out onstage without a microphone, which he left backstage. He had to run back to get it. I was so pissed off. I told him that's such a stupid thing to do, like a musician forgetting his guitar. I said, "You ruined the show tonight." Then I didn't speak to him for a month.

Do you yell at your cast?

No, I don't. I don't scare people. I don't believe in fear as a motivation, for anything. Which is why I also have problems with the Catholic Church when it says you have to fear God. Why do we have to do things out of fear? Why can't we do it out of love? It's a better motivation.

What's your favorite musical?

"Rent." I first saw it in New York. It's also because so many of the people involved in the Broadway production have been close to me.

The family of the composer who died, Jonathan Larson, they are close to me. And all of Larson's friends have also become my friends.

I also think the show is so powerful. The music and the way it speaks to a generation is really powerful. It's a play about relationships and it can only work if you've developed genuine relationships with each other and make sure that all the choices you make are based on relationships.

Do you have to have a part of you in each production?

I think you surrender a part of yourself in order to make the project. I don't know if you can watch it and say, "Ah, that's Bobby Garcia's play." I think what the director really surrenders is the feeling. There's a feeling it has that comes from the director.

Eventually, if you watch a director's work, like Steven Spielberg's, there's a feeling and sensation you get that you know you're watching a Spielberg movie, even if you don't see the credits.

What part of "Rent" is you?

What keeps going in "Rent" is really the aspect of relationships. From day one, I told the cast, "This is a play about relationships and it can only work if you really develop genuine relationships with each other and make sure that all the choices you make are based on your relationships with each other."

The play was never about one person. It's about the relationships every one had with each other and how every else was affected. When you saw the relationships onstage, that was what I encouraged them to do.

What movie has affected you much as "Peter Pan" did?

I love "The Wizard of Oz," with Judy Garland. That's one of my favorite movies. If I have to go to a desert island, I would bring that. The weird thing is I will also bring "Silence of the Lambs." I found it so well-made and I was in genuine fear throughout the movie.

I love "The Color Purple." I was 12 years old when I saw it and I cried so much.

Name a memorable scene in theater that affected you so much?

The opening sequence of "Lion King." I was in tears and I stood up. One woman created all of that, Julie Taymor. It's really amazing. She's my idol in theater. I love her work.

Who are your idols?

If there is one person I wished I had met and had the honor of speaking to, it's Audrey Hepburn. I love her work. "Roman Holiday," "Breakfast at Tiffany's," "Love in the Afternoon." She was just so delightful onscreen.

To have used your stature in affecting other people's life, the way she did for Unicef, it's so beautiful. I'm saddened that we don't have her anymore.

I would have told her how much in awe I am of her and I would have told her we need more people like her who can use their accomplishments to achieve other things for other people and not use it for publicity. She didn't care whether she would get a press release for what she did. She just went and did her work and helped other people. The more we have people like her, the better the world will become.

What if you meet Spielberg, what will you tell him?

I won't be able to speak for an hour . . . But given a chance to talk to him, I will tell him how much his work has influenced my life ever since I was a child and how much I respect the work he's done. And how one person can change another person's life.

What's your favorite Spielberg movie?

I love "Schindler's List." I got a headache with "Saving Private Ryan." But my real favorite is "E.T." It was so magical and I was like taken to another world. I still watch it on video, and every time, I am moved.

If you were offered a stage role, what would you like it to be?

A no-speaking line butler so I don't have to memorize anything. But if there's anything that I'd really like to play, it's one of the characters from Tennessee Williams, like Stanley in "Streetcar Named Desire."

There's something real about Williams' characters so that when you watch the play, you feel that you are watching a true story about people from a particular time, like the people existed before or they lived real lives.

What are your strengths as a director and as a person?

I'm very meticulous as a director. I need to fully understand the work I'm doing before I do it. I spend six months before we get into the rehearsals.

As a person, I'm very optimistic. I want to believe that we can all be better and we can improve.

What are your weaknesses?

My biggest weakness, I think, is I'm not as forgiving as I'd like to be. I can shut people out of my life very easily.

The older you get, the more selfish you are with your time. Now I feel that time past is part of my life past. So if I'm with people who are not essential to my growth as a person, I'm just wasting my time. I want people in my life who will make me better, not worse.

What are you so passionate about?

My work. It crosses my private life so much. I go to sleep thinking of my shows. I have work hangover. I haven't gotten the work I do out of my system yet, for me to move on and do other things.

I do hope one day I will be able to do things like Audrey Hepburn did. But I'm in no position to do that right now, no one will listen to me.

Do you have a downside?

I'm pretty much a loner. I don't want to socialize a lot. I don't enjoy parties and bars. Even if I get invited, I don't go all the time. At night, I'm usually at home writing or watching a movie.

I'm now writing a script for a movie based on an old, 18th century French play, "La Ronde" by Arthur Schnitzler. It was translated to Broadway and was called "The Blue Room," with Nicole Kidman. But I'm adapting the old play, with a Philippine setting.

At 31, how old do you feel?

I feel 17 and I'm new here today. *Naks,* that's from "Miss Saigon," *ha.* I feel very much like a kid. My mind is still very much a child's.

Create your epitaph.

Here lies Bobby Garcia who LIVED, all caps.

I'm so proud of the 31 years I've had. I feel so blessed. God has allowed me to accomplish so much, personally and professionally.

What don't you have now that you'd like to have?

As a director, I would like to have an original work that's exciting. All the works I've done in the past are Broadway and off-Broadway shows that have been staged before.

I want to stage and write something new and one that will be remembered for a long time. *Louie C. Camino and Leah Salterio*

Awesome reversal of roles

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

IN the new "Planet of the Apes" film, **Mark Wahlberg** plays an astronaut who finds himself in a future world where apes have become masters, and humans have been reduced to slavery.

How did such an awesome reversal of roles come to pass? The film is vague on that, but the final outcome of apes behaving like humans isn't an improvement at all, since the apes turn out to be no better than their human masters.

In fact, they literally *ape* the despised humans' worst traits and vices, treating their homo sapiens slaves as cruelly as some humans treat chimps today.

Is this intentional on the production's part, to show that evil propensities die hard in any species? Or does the movie resort to this approach because it's the easiest to pull off, and the most recognizable for today's moviegoers?

Whatever the case, the "apes behaving like humans" scenes soon feel phoney and done for effect. The film fares better when the apes are allowed to behave like apes, screaming, growling, leaping from building to building, etc.

As the movie's slim story progresses, Wahlberg becomes a freedom fighter, leading the other human slaves to the designated spot where he is supposed to be rescued by his mother ship.

Alas, when the appointed time comes, the astronaut discovers that he's been caught in a time warp, and "today" is in fact thousands of years in the future, so no rescue can take place.

Is he doomed to die in this topsy-turvy planet far from home? Not to worry—one rather implausible happy ending coming up!

Truth to tell, the first "Planet of the Apes" movie starring **Charlton Heston** was more of a piece than this new production. An image from that 1968 film by **Franklin Schaffner** still lingers in the mind's eye: finding the Statue of Liberty in ruins in his shocking future world.

For his part, Wahlberg makes an excessively pensive and phlegmatic "freedom fighter"—no dynamic, heroic figure, he. As for the ape characters in this new movie, they have great prosthetics, but not much else.

"Planet of the Apes" can be appreciated for its production design and visual flourishes. But its story doesn't really come to a dramatic head, so viewing it is as thrilling and involving as spending two hours in an upside-down cinematic zoo, ho-hum.

Feedback

FROM **John Guce**: "I want to share some information about "Blood: The Last Vampire," an *animé* movie. This is a bilingual production where the characters speak both in English and Japanese. I hear that 'Titanic' director **James Cameron** really likes it.

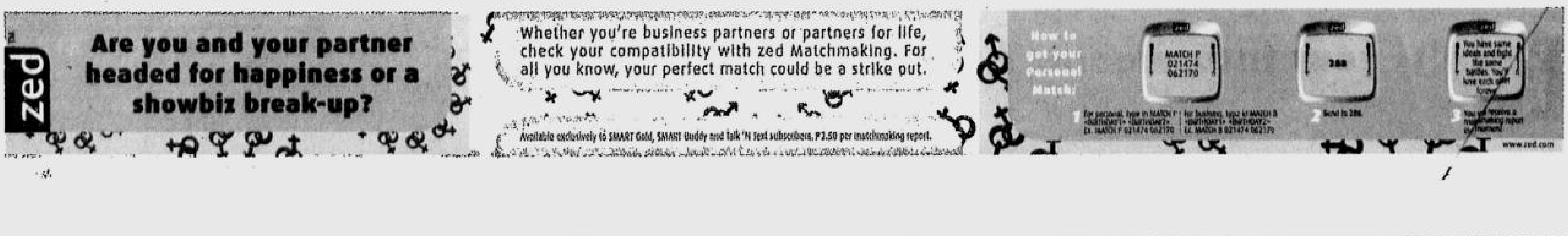
"The film is set in 1966, during the Vietnam war. At a Japanese airbase, some suicides are reported. Blood-sucking Chiropterans have concealed themselves in their human hosts, and the heroine, Saya, is tasked to attack and vanquish them.

"The film was a hit in Japanese theaters last year. Manga Entertainment will release the VHS (dubbed in English) and DVD (bilingual) on Aug. 28."

TV treats

FRIDAY, Aug. 31 at 5:15 p.m. on Star Movies, "Bartok the Magnificent," an animated feature. Bartok the Bat teams up with Zozi the Bear to rescue Prince Ivan from the clutches of the evil witch, Baba Yaga.

Aug. 30 at 9:30 p.m. on the National Geographic Channel, "Tomorrow's World" features new inventions like the Anesthesia Monitor, Helicopter Simulator, Dog Suit, a new and safer air bag, and a new way of monitoring plants by remote to produce bigger and healthier crops.



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6-month trade surplus shrinks 68%

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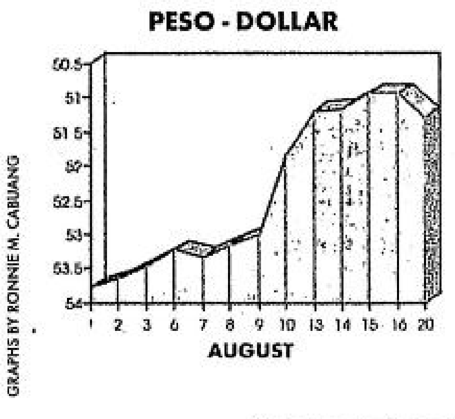

Peso-Dollar Rate

P 51.30 = $1

As of 5 p.m.,
August 20, 2001

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As of 5 p.m.,
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GOLD:$278.10/278.60
per ounce Hong Kong,
August 20, 2001

Shares rise 0.4%

SHARE prices rose 0.4 percent yesterday on technical buying of PLDT after it fell to an eight-year low, brokers said.

The dominant carrier "went down to an eight-year low of P550 last week. Now it's gone up to P565," said Mike Ordinanza of PCI Capital Corp.

The Philippine Stock Exchange

SHARES/ B2

BY DORIS C. DUMLAO

THE COUNTRY'S trade surplus for the first six months of this year shrank by 67.85 percent to $733 million, crimped by a slowing US economy and sluggish global demand for electronics.

The National Statistics office said that imports for the January-to-June period totaled $15.26 billion and exports were at $15.99 billion. The surplus was at $2.28 billion for the same period in 2000.

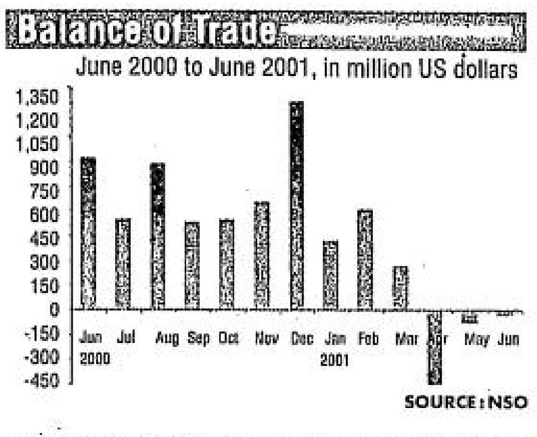
For the month of June alone, the Philippines posted a trade deficit of $31 million, with imports at $2.61 billion and exports at $2.58 billion.

Imports rose for the third month in a row in June after a series of contractions. Buoyed by higher shipments of electronics and telecommunications products, imports expanded 4.6 percent to $2.61 billion in June from $2.5 billion in the same month last year, NSO data showed.

The pace of growth, however, was slower than in May and April, when imports rose 10 percent and 6.5 percent, respectively.

Imports serve as an indication of how the country's exports might fare in the coming months as they are mostly of goods used as inputs by the export production sector.

The trade balance also remained in deficit for the third straight month in June after a two-year run of surpluses. The June deficit totaled $31 million after a $915-million surplus in June of last year.



The decline in the trade surplus came as no surprise to most analysts because the Philippines, like many others in the region, was heavily dependent on exports of electronic components to the United States.

"It was expected. We're seeing a slowdown on the trade front and the Philippines is no exception," said Song Seng Wun, a regional economist at G.K. Goh Securities in Singapore.

"Unless we see a sharp turnaround in exports, we see more months of trade deficit and that again, would be negative," he added.

Luz Lorenzo, an economist at ATR-KIM Eng Securities, said prospects for an export recovery in the second half of the year were bleak.

"There's not much positive news out there. The peso was very volatile and that's going to affect the prices of imports. We need to stimulate the domestic economy more rather than depend on exports. I'm not pinning my hopes on an export recovery soon," she said.

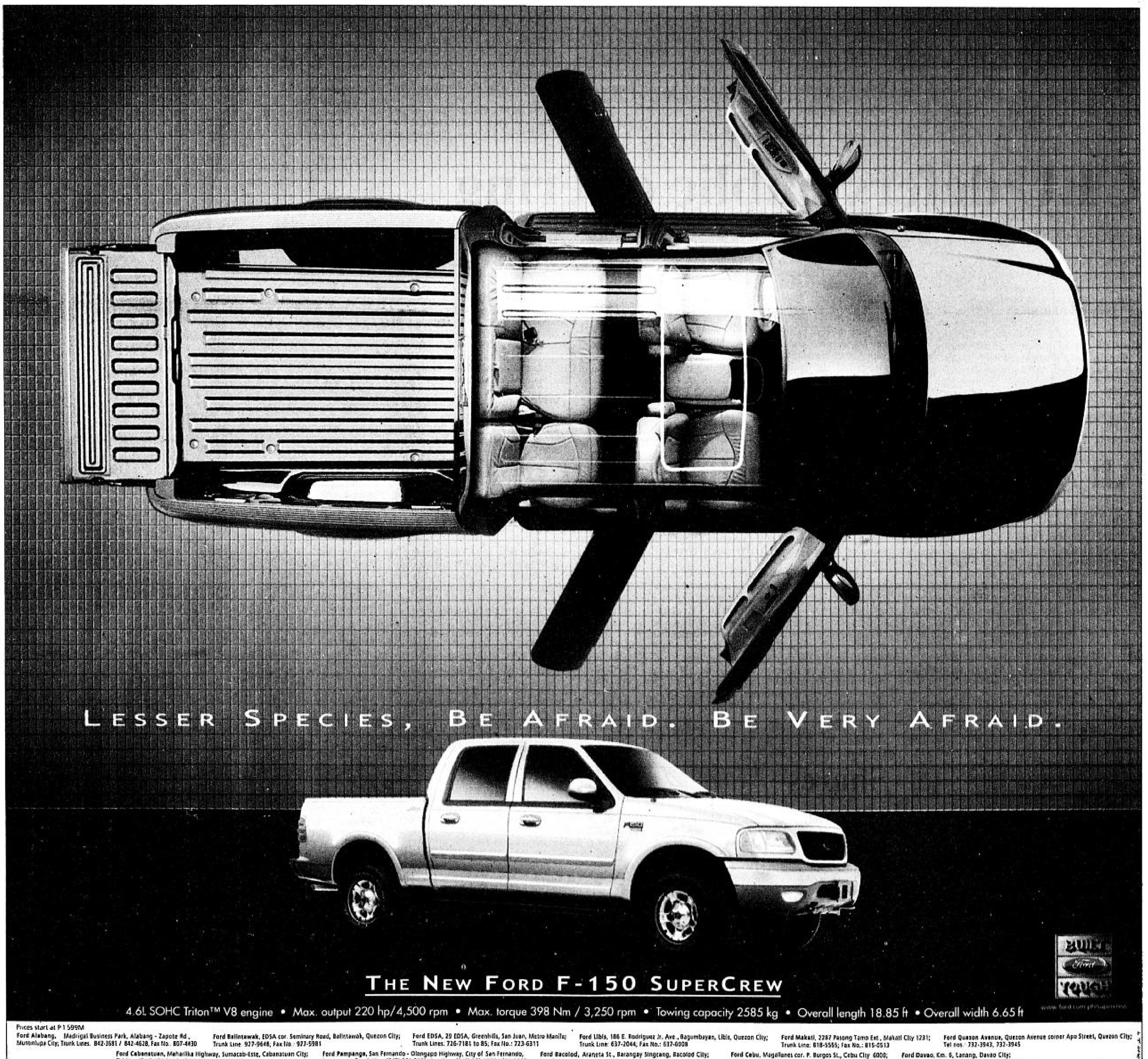
Analysts said while there was still growth in the country's electronics sector with companies proceeding with expansion plans, the export picture still looked bleak.

The NSO said electronics components imports rose 4.8 percent to $537.05 million in June, accounting for 20.6 percent of the total import bill.

Purchases of telecommunication equipment and electrical machinery rose 16.3 percent to $292.45 million, accounting for 11.2 percent of total imports for the month.

Mineral fuel imports fell 9.6 percent to $276.36 million in June.

Purchases of Japanese goods accounted for 20.5 percent of the total for June, followed by the United States and Singapore. *With INQUIRER wire reports*



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Why fix it if it ain't brokered

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

THEY say the MRT project was a sweetheart deal. For the sake of Ador's bigshot jailors, the MRT is the mass transit system on Edsa.

If the MRT truly was a sweetheart deal, then the administration of Tita Cory was the seducer, and the administration of Kuya Eddie, the consummator.

The administration of the man named Band . . . Wrist Band . . . was only a voyeur, without giving a hand in doing the contract. It was just there watching the project finish.

For that matter, even before the second round, this cute administration of Gloriaetta is already becoming the third party, causing a bitter case of divorce.

Do I hate metaphors! Let's just say, in this country, it takes that long to do a vital project like mass transit. Involved in the MRT are four administrations. It's not yet done.

* * *

ACTUALLY, the project started in the late 1980s, when the Aquino administration awarded it to the group of a certain Eli Levin. Nothing, of course, happened.

Many long years of killer traffic later, in 1996, the Ramos administration ordered a consortium called MRT Corp. to start construction. And they should better hurry!

In 2000, finally, the Estrada administration proudly inaugurated it. Before the second phase could be started, unfortunately, the administration had to be sent home.

Now the Arroyo administration is delaying the next phase, a 5-kilometer stretch from the MRT's last station in Quezon City to Caloocan City, linking MRT with LRT.

The Department of Transportation and Communications wants no part in that so-called sweetheart deal! Maybe the DOTC is only into sexual harassment. Oops!

* * *

ANYWAY, talk of an amorous affair between MRTC and the government came about during the time of Wrist Band. As always, it was said, the government was stupid.

For why did the government agree to guarantee the profits of the consortium? Thus, even if the MRT loses money, the consortium still gets its profits from taxpayers.

Moreover, the government even had to repay, from out of its own pocket, the consortium's some $400-million loan which was used for the project.

Some brilliant guys in "civil society" argued that, if such were the terms of the MRT contract, the government should have just done the project itself.

That's why the DOTC wants to change the terms by rebidding the second phase. Never mind that the original contract covers the second phase. A rebid is thus illegal.

* * *

BUT who cares about legality anymore? Some of our dear senators even thought that such was really just gobbledygook clothed in legal jargon with technical lingo inside.

Let's even put legality aside. Supposing the government can rebid the second phase, no problem, is it a wise management decision? Only if MRTC wins it!

For one, the consortium already established a track record. We know it can finish the job on time. Not only that, when the system is finished, we know it can also run.

In Taiwan, despite all that money of the government, the 10-year-old mass transit system still has kinks. When it started operations, actually, the train would not run.

Here we have a consortium, which already proved itself. We know it can deliver. All right, admittedly, the government also has a track record. Take a look at LRT 2!

* * *

COLLECTING cobwebs is that construction of the light rail line along Aurora Blvd. Whadayano, the government itself handled the project. Well, all right, "mishandled!"

Now nobody can say how soon this cute administration wants the second phase done. I just know Gloriaetta is gaga over mass transit. Can it finish the project by 2004?

When it comes to building a railway system on a busy thoroughfare in a crowded metropolis, we know that MRTC is already a pro! If it ain't broke, why fix it?

I mean, we know that the MRTC formula works. Because of its experience in the first phase of the MRT, we also know that it can now even get good financing terns.

The consortium, I heard, has an offer from the Spanish government for a virtually interest-free loan. Its repayment is also much longer than Ador's detention. Hopefully!

* * *

SO, anyway, if that's the case, shall we just put track record above anything else like taxpayers? And didn't MRTC gain precious experience also at our expense?

What a stupid, ignorant argument! Again, those who say the MRT was a sweetheart deal do not know pipsqueak about it, to begin with. Will you just shut up?

From the very start, precisely, the MRT would not get off the ground for a simple reason. And that is, money! It's just that the original proponents did not have it.

How they got the contract is beyond me. Ask Tita Cory's boys at DOTC then. That's why the project even found a savior in MRTC.

Beaten in the bidding for Fort Bonifacio, the consortium then did not know what to do with their money set aside for the bid. So they sank $200 million into the MRT.

* * *

EVEN then I thought the consortium was crazy enough to start construction, putting their $200 million upfront, even before they could secure all the loans for the project.

But they did, and it was a big risk! Time was MRTC even piled up payables with its contractor of some $80 million. The loans were not yet available.

Since MRTC built the system for the government, using its own money and arranging the financing, I cannot understand why it does not deserve profits.

Let's say the consortium just did not care about solving the traffic problem. It kept its cool 200 million, in dollars, and it did not spend it for the MRT construction.

Thanks to the peso depreciation from 26 to 52 to $1, the money would have doubled by now. And without the consortium doing anything crazy like taking risks!

* * *

AND it's not as if MRTC is making a killing. The government assured the consortium a return of 15 percent. Sure, it's a big deal.

If the consortium instead put its money and effort in hi-tech stocks, and it was right in time for the US stock market boom, it could have made a thousand times more.

And it could enjoy the returns right away. As the so-called sweatheart deal goes, MRTC gets its money back in 12 years, and its profits, in 13 years thereafter.

In other words, MRTC put its money upfront, only to get its 15 percent return 25 years later. Crazy! And now they even say it looks like a brokered deal, and so let's fix it!

Me, I'd give those guys a medal! They finished the project with their own money and handed it over to the government on time. To think, the trains are also running.

CEU defers public offering

BY DORIS C. DUMLAO

CENTRO Escolar University has shelved its initial public offering plan this year in favor of a P2.5-billion capital increase through private placements.

In an interview with the INQUIRER, CEU vice chair Ernesto Echauz said the university's board of directors recently approved the private placement and had mandated Credit Lyonnais Exchange Capital and SB Capital to underwrite the offering.

The private placement, which will raise P2 billion to P2.5 billion, will represent 20 to 30 percent of the company's total equity, Echauz said. These would be spent for further expansion, particularly of the new CEU campus in Malolos, Bulacan.

The earlier plan was to raise as much as P3 billion from an IPO. While CEU had been listed on the Philippine Stock Exchange since the 1980s, it has never conducted any IPO. In the past, the PSE allowed the conversion of privately held shares into listed shares tradable on the exchange even without any portion offered to the public.

Aside from providing funds to support its expansion plans, the IPO was intended to provide liquidity to its shares through additional volume of stocks traded in the market.

With the poor performance of the local stock market, however, Echauz said fund-raising through a private placement was more viable, although this exercise would also require certain stability of market conditions.

"Private placement may work in a market that's not doing well, but if the market turns out too bad, it won't be viable either. Even if CEU's target market for the placement would be specialized funds, let's say for education, these investors would also rely on the market as an exit mechanism," Echauz said.

As such, Echauz said there was no target date yet for the closing of the proposed private placement. He said CEU was targeting mostly foreign investors for the private placement.

"Proceeds from the IPO will be used to expand the Malolos campus. What we'll do is that the Malolos campus will duplicate the Mendiola campus. Whatever courses are offered in Mendiola will likewise be offered there," Echauz said.

He said the target was to increase the annual enrollment in CEU-Malolos to 10,000 students within three years. The main Mendiola campus currently enrolls around 23,000 students.

Echauz said CEU has likewise started phasing in online education to complement traditional classroom learning using modules used by the National University of Singapore.

All Asia liquidation pushed

BY ELENA R. TORRIJOS

INTERNATIONAL Finance Corp., the World Bank's investment arm, is pressing the Securities and Exchange Commission to liquidate All Asia Capital and Trust Corp., which has yet to recover from a liquidity crunch last year, an official of the SEC said.

Officers of IFC, All Asia and SEC met last week to thresh out how to deal with the ailing investment house.

All Asia informally presented a rehabilitation plan involving capital infusion and debt restructuring but IFC asserted the plan was not viable.

The SEC's view was that All Asia should be rehabilitated to help unsecured creditors recover their placements, the official said.

Last year, the SEC issued a cease-and-desist order against All Asia after it found that the investment house had violated some of the country's laws.

Results of an SEC audit of All Asia showed that liabilities of commercial paper issuers Reynolds Philippines Corp. and Mondragon International Philippines were held by All Asia for more than 180 days and exceeded 5 percent of the investment firm's net worth or beyond the applicable single borrower's limit.

The SEC, however, soon lifted the CDO on condition the investment firm raised additional capital, paid corresponding penalties for non-registration of commercial papers, strictly followed the CP rules and single borrower's limit rule, properly observed accounting procedures for each financial intermediary and submitted to the Commission measures to be taken to resolve the firm's liquidity problem.

Since last year, however, All Asia has yet to formally submit its rehabilitation plan to the SEC. Its license to operate as an investment house actually lapsed in end-July this year and has not been renewed by the SEC.

IFC owns a 7-percent stake in All Asia and has an outstanding loan to the local investment firm amounting to $17 million.

PLDT eyes flat rate for payphone calls

BY ABIGAIL L. HO

THERE may no longer be a "free call" function in PLDT payphones because of prank 108 and 109 calls.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. has filed a proposal with the National Telecommunications Commission over a week ago to apply a flat rate similar to local calls for its national and international long distance payphone services.

"PLDT claimed that there have been a lot of prank calls made through their 'free call only' payphones over the past months," NTC common carriers authorization division head Edgardo Cabarios said in an interview.

Calls are considered "prank calls" when the caller dials 108 or 109, but does not place a long distance call.

"They will call (the operator), but they will not continue the call. The operator's time is consumed by a prank caller instead of a person who really wants to place a long distance call," he explained.

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15	MANILA SOUTHWOODS GOLF CLUB "B"	850,000.00	-
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Shares

(From page B1)

composite index added 4.96 points to close at 1,311.13. The broader All Shares Index declined 2.55 points to 768.07 following a 2.02-point slide Friday to 770.62. Losers beat gainers 36 to 16, with 34 issues closing unchanged.

The presence of some institutional buyers indicate some fundamental positioning in PLDT, said Martin Enrile, an analyst for ATR Kim Eng Securities Inc.

"I think the market is beginning to realize that the debt fears of PLDT are not nearly as critical as earlier presumed," he said, amid reports it may fail to meet terms with creditors for a $200-million loan.

Turnover fell to 256 million shares worth P377 million, compared to 501 million shares worth P487.9 million traded on Friday.

Another gainer was San Miguel, which investors have been steadily accumulating on expected gains from its recent acquisitions. *AFP, AP*

DISCLOSURES

FIRST Abacus Financial Holdings Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on Sept. 6 at 8 a.m. at the Via Mare Restaurant, Philippine Stock Exchange Center, Ortigas Center, Pasig. Record date is July 13.

* * *

THE BOARD of **iPeople Inc.** approved the amendments in its articles of incorporation, changing its primary purpose to engage more in information technology and education and the declassification of Class "A" and Class "B" shares to common shares. However, the change will not yet be reflected in the Exchange's computer system.

* * *

GRAND Plaza Hotel Corp. confirmed the completion of its buyback transaction on Aug. 14. Eligible stockholders who availed themselves of the buyback offer tendered a total of 12,345,164 common shares of the corporation.

* * *

JOLLIBEE Foods Corp. disclosed that as of Aug. 16 the corporation exercised and paid for 62,531 shares under the company's stock option plan.

* * *

ELECTED directors of **BHI Holdings Inc.** were Manuel Tankiansee, Juanita Tan, Romulo Sigua, Jemie Tan, Miguel Ocampo-Tan, Emma Keng Ocampo-Tan, Rudin Gonzales, Marilou Pua, Brigido Dulay Jr., Nemesio Ang and Remedios Balingit.

* * *

REYNOLDS Philippines Corp. disclosed that **Land Bank of the Philippines** authorized the registration of 361,205,257 of the corporations' shares of stock in its name.

* * *

BANK of the Philippine Islands clarified that through its wholly owned subsidiary, BPI Family Bank, it will acquire by sale 100 percent of DBS Bank Philippines from Development Bank of Singapore. After which, DBS Bank Philippines will be merged with and into BPI Family Bank, the latter acquiring the commercial bank license of DBS, all subject to the approval of government regulatory bodies. Six months is the estimated completion of the whole plan.

* * *

ZEUS Holdings Inc. sold off all its landholdings consisting of five parcels of land located in San Ildefonso, Bulacan. Two parcels were sold to **Monte Dapples Trading Corp.** for an aggregate amount of P11.3 million and three parcels to **Eagle Cement Corp.** for an aggregate amount of P20.1 million. *Compiled by Ray Leyesa, PDI Research*

Philippine Stock Exchange

(As of Monday, August 20, 2001)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.6	11,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	63	63.5	63	63	29,700
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	32	32	32	32	81,300
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	210	210	210	210	100
Philippine National Bank	52	52	51.5	52	326,000
Security Bank Corp.	18.75	19.5	18.75	19.25	5,900
Union Bank of the Phil.	24.75	24.75	24.75	24.75	5,100
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.3	8,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	10,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1450	1455	1450	1455	3,630
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1165	1170	1165	1170	11,020
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	35.5	36	35.5	36	800
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	0.48	0.48	0.48	0.48	260,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	640	640	640	640	120
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.48	0.48	0.48	0.48	20,000,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	560	575	560	565	166,770
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.031	0.031	0.03	0.031	23,500,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	33	33.5	32.5	32.5	82,400
Manila Electric Co. B	43	44	43	43.5	1,628,400
Petron Corp.	1.88	1.88	1.86	1.86	58,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	90,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	1.98	1.98	1.98	1.98	197,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	110,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Republic Cement Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	30,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.18	1.2	1.18	1.2	4,442,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.06	2.06	2.06	2.06	170,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	1,140,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	13.5	13.5	13.5	13.5	323,700
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	25.5	26	25.5	26	17,500
RFM Corp.	2.3	2.3	2.28	2.3	631,000
San Miguel Corp. A	40.5	42.5	40.5	41.5	69,700
San Miguel Corp. B	53.5	54.5	53.5	54	90,200
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.3	1,382,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	1.56	1.56	1.54	1.54	246,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.98	0.98	0.96	0.96	1,340,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	250,000
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.245	0.245	0.225	0.225	660,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.8	1.8	1.78	1.8	1,065,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	220,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	1,100,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	20,000
Ebecom Holdings Inc.	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	1,130,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	0.87	0.87	0.87	0.87	40,000
First Phil Hldgs. Corp.	29	29	29	29	31,400
Global Equities Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	500,000
Guoco Holdings (Phils.)	0.2	0.22	0.2	0.22	810,000
Ionics Inc.	11	11	11	11	900
Ipeople Inc. B	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	40,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.96	1.96	1.96	1.96	100,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.46	1.46	1.4	1.4	123,000
Medco Holdings	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	20,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.69	0.69	0.68	0.68	80,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	1,480,000
Philtread Holdings Corp.	3.65	3.65	3.65	3.65	20,000
Philtread Hdgs. Corp. B	3.65	3.65	3.65	3.65	15,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	100,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.21	0.225	0.21	0.225	260,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Interphil Labs Inc. A	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	10,000
Music Corp.	1.54	1.54	1.5	1.5	135,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.56	0.56	0.55	0.55	60,000
Pryce Corp.	0.2	0.2	0.18	0.18	63,440,000
Central Azucar Don Pedro	0.8	0.82	0.8	0.81	220,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.53	0.54	0.53	0.54	550,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	10,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	35.5	35.5	35.5	35.5	1,510,700
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10	10	10	10	100
Philweb.Com Inc.-Warrants	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.013	36,500,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	4.8	4.85	4.75	4.8	5,018,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.225	10,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.27	0.36	0.27	0.36	13,860,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	110,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.94	1.94	1.94	1.94	876,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.22	0.225	0.22	0.225	620,000
Primex Corp.	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	6,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.3	6.4	6.2	6.3	2,438,000
Universal Rightfield Prop.	0.0725	0.0725	0.0725	0.0725	2,000,000
Urbancorp Realty Dev. Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	70,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	1,000,000
Itogon-Suyoc Mines A	0.049	0.05	0.047	0.047	59,100,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	1,640,000
Polar Mines & Dev't Corp.	0.02	0.02	0.019	0.019	1,500,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.4	0.42	0.4	0.42	400,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.41	0.44	0.41	0.44	900,000
OIL					
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	200,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.21	0.22	0.21	0.22	30,000

	SHARES	VALUE (P)
Banks & Fin Svc	491,750	39,834,775.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	178,821,854	905,280,670.00
PRO	25,008,000	46,056,840.00
Mining	64,540,000	3,740,000.00
OIL	230,000	56,400.00
GRAND TOTALS:	269,110,604	995,031,135.00

AVERAGES

Banks & Fin Svc	540.60	DOWN 2.08
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,842.88	UP 12.20
PRO	504.18	DOWN 2.12
Mining	1,306.14	UP 20.76
OIL	1.70	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	768.07	DOWN 2.55
Composite	1,311.13	UP 4.96

NO. OF ADVANCES: 16; NO. OF DECLINES: 36; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 34; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 86; NO. OF TRADES: 1,507

CURRENCIES

August 20, 2001

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.089206	1.000000	51.1930
Japan	Yen	0.009060	0.008318	0.4258
United Kingdom	Pound	1.574883	1.445900	74.0200
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.139655	0.128217	6.5638
Switzerland	Franc	0.657693	0.603828	30.9118
Canada	Dollar	0.705609	0.647820	33.1638
Singapore	Dollar	0.621799	0.570874	29.2248
Australia	Dollar	0.581406	0.533789	27.3263
Bahrain	Dinar	2.889294	2.652661	135.7977
Kuwait	Dinar	N/A	N/A	N/A
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.290424	0.266638	13.6500
Brunei	Dollar	0.620631	0.569801	29.1698
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000125	0.000115	0.0059
Thailand	Baht	0.024312	0.022321	1.1427
UAE	Dirham	0.296625	0.272331	13.9414
Korea	Won	0.000855	0.000785	0.0402
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.918100	47.0003
Germany	Mark	0.511292	0.469417	24.0309
France	Franc	0.152450	0.139963	7.1651
Netherlands	Guilder	0.453781	0.416616	21.3278
Austria	Schilling	0.072673	0.066721	3.4156
Belgium	Franc	0.024789	0.022759	1.1651
Italy	Lira	0.000516	0.000474	0.0243
Finland	Markka	0.168188	0.154413	7.9049
Portugal	Escudo	0.004987	0.004579	0.2344
Spain	Peseta	0.006010	0.005518	0.2825
Luxemburg	Franc	0.024789	0.022759	1.1651
Ireland	Punt	1.269739	1.165747	59.6781

T-bill yields mixed; reserves watch still on

By Clarissa S. Batino

TREASURY bill yields ended mixed yesterday as rates of longer-dated instruments continued to rise in anticipation of a further increase in the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' reserve requirement.

The rate of the benchmark 91-day T-bill, on the other hand, slid by 6.2 basis points.

National Treasurer Sergio Edeza said in an interview that the government's borrowing rates would linger at a relatively high level as long as there existed the possibility that the central bank would raise its reserve requirement.

The reserve requirement determines the portion of a bank's deposits and deposit-substitutes that must be kept in the central bank's vaults.

The 91-day T-bill rate eased to 9.59 percent while yields of the six-month and one-year instruments rose by 13.4 points and by 24.1 points to 11.659 percent and 12.798 percent.

Edeza said the 91-day T-bill rate used as a benchmark by banks for their own rates slid as the remaining liquidity in the market flocked to the short-term borrowing of the government.

"The market continues to be defensive on the longer term in view of a further hike in banks' reserves by the BSP," he said.

The central bank has twice raised its reserve requirement by two percentage points.

The reserve requirement currently stands at 20 percent, which means P1 out of every P5 placed with banks must be kept in the central bank's vaults.

The higher reserve requirement has allowed the central bank to mop up some P55 billion in excess money that may be used to speculate against the peso.

The local currency has recovered strongly following the higher reserve requirement set by the central bank.

"My view is that rates will remain high for as long as the potential for an increase in reserves remain," Edeza said.

Traders said local interest rates in the past three months had been held hostage by movements of peso-dollar exchange rate.

The central bank's monetary policy has lately been focused on lifting the peso.

A treasury official from a medium-size bank said with the threat to the peso over for now, the fixed-income market might resume its "normal activity" unless the central bank decides to jack up its reserve requirement anew.

Edeza said the government's healthy cash position had cushioned its policy on local interest rates and allowed it to reject unreasonably high bids in previous weeks.

Japanese firm takes interest in gas project

By Ronnel W. Domingo

A JAPANESE company has joined the growing list of firms interested in the proposed onshore pipeline project that will bring natural gas from Batangas to Metro Manila, according to Energy Secretary Vicente Perez Jr..

"The Japanese group has told me several times they like to get involved," Perez said in a news briefing.

He said the list included the Malampaya consortium—Shell Philippines Exploration BV, Texaco Philippines and PNOC Exploration Co.—and First Gas Power Corp.

Although both PNOC-EC and First Gas are involved in joint studies with the consortium led by Spex, the two are also considering the possibility of putting up a 100-kilometer pipeline on their own.

In an interview in June, PNOC-EC president Rufino Bomasang said the state-run firm had completed a study on the feasibility of the project in 1998, but that it was waiting for the results of a study led by Spex.

He said PNOC-EC was very interested in the pipeline, but the government preferred to let the private sector take on the project.

"But if (private firms) would not do it, we would be glad to," Bomasang said.

Gov't to meet revenue target–Camacho

FINANCE Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho yesterday told Congress that some P6.6 billion worth of non-tax items would allow the government to meet its yearend revenue target of P558.2 billion.

In a presentation, Camacho disclosed that the government was expecting some P2.3 billion from higher dividends from state-owned corporations, P3 billion from the sale of its assets and P1.3 billion in fees and charges collected by its agencies.

These non-tax earnings, he said, would boost the Bureau of Treasury's collections by P10.2 billion in the second half of the year. The BTr had already collected over P20.16 billion as of July, he reported.

The government now sees earnings of P9.5 billion from the privatization of its assets and P12.1 billion from its fees and charges in the remaining months of the year.

As of July, the government had only raised P500 million from the sale of its assets and P11.765 billion from fees and charges.

The government expects to earn around P4 billion to P5 billion from the sale of its 10-percent stake in Manila Electric Co. this year. It is also set to sell state-run International Broadcasting Corp., which operates Channel 13.

"The additional P3-billion income from the sale of assets is expected because of the improvement in market conditions," Camacho told lawmakers.

He said some agencies would implement higher rates in the second half of the year.

The finance secretary expressed confidence that the government's total revenue in the second half of the year would reach P291.5 billion to complement the P266.699 billion it earned from January to June.

Camacho said P259.6 billion would come from tax earnings while P31.9 billion would be collected from non-tax items.

He said he was counting on the Bureau of Internal Revenue to collect at least P197 billion from July to December to achieve its revised P388-billion full-year target. In the first six months of the year, the BIR collected around P191.077 billion. *Clarissa S. Batino*

$69M in 'hot money' pulled out in July as peso weakened–BSP

JITTERY foreign portfolio investors aggressively took their so-called hot money out of the Philippines as the peso tumbled last month, leading to a $14.4-million net outflow in July that reversed the previous month's $144-million net inflow.

Data furnished by five custodian banks to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas showed that some $68.9 million worth of portfolio investments left the country in July against $54.5 million that went in.

In the seven months to July, the country's net inflow position slipped to $21.9 million from $36.3 million as of June.

Banking analysts said uncertainties in the foreign exchange market worsened in mid-July, forcing portfolio investors to move their money and park them in safer shores abroad.

On July 18, the peso tumbled to 54.335 to a dollar, its lowest level since the Macapagal-Arroyo administration took over after a bloodless revolt in January that ousted then President Joseph Estrada.

President Macapagal-Arroyo's efforts to talk the peso up and a more aggressive monetary policy set in motion by the central bank lifted the local currency.

In a state visit to Malaysia, Ms Macapagal, who believed the peso's "real value" was at 50 to a dollar, suggested that she was open to imposing currency controls.

At the same time, the BSP slapped fines on some of the country's biggest banks for currency speculation and warned that it would impose higher penalties to parry attacks meant to pull the peso down. The central bank also raised its reserve requirement to lessen the money that banks could use to speculate against the local currency.

The President's strong statements and the central bank's crackdown on currency speculators had since lifted the peso to within striking distance of the Macapagal administration's target of an exchange rate of 50 to a dollar by year's end.

The peso closed slightly lower yesterday at 51.30 from Friday's 51.14.

The BSP said the outflow of "hot money" had apparently eased, as it pointed out that July's net outflow of $68.9 million was far less than the $382 million that fled the country in July last year. At the time, the country was going through an economic and political crisis sparked by allegations that then President Estrada received millions in payoffs from illegal gambling operators.

Clarissa S. Batino

COUNTRY SHARES
As of August 21, 2001

	BUYING	SELLING
ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB A/B*	1,600,000	1.8 M/2 1 M*
BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB	750,000	800,000
CALATAGAN GOLF CLUB A	-	100,000
CAMP JOHN HAY	325,000	350,000
CAPITOL HILLS	130,000	135,000
CELEBRITY SPORTS CLUB	210,000	215,000
EAGLE RIDGE A/B*/C**	550,000/650,000**	400,000/450,000*/700,000**
EASTRIDGE A	-	200,000
EVERCREST A/B*	-	150,000/170,000*
FONTANA D/C*/B**	88,000/120,000*	90,000/150,000*/280,000**
FOREST HILLS A/B*/C**	-	240,000/350,000*/450,000**
LUISITA GOLF CLUB	500,000	Pls. Call
MAKATI SPORTS A/B*	-	350,000/400,000*
MT. MALARAYAT A/C* (w/lot)**	-	400,000/650,000*/2.0 M**
MANILA POLO CLUB	-	3,575,000
MANILA SOUTHWOODS A/B*	-	800,000/850,000*
METROPOLITAN A/B*	-	175,000/180,000*
MIMOSA IND./CORP.*	350,000*	240,000/550,000*
ORCHARD A/B*/C**	600,000**	250,000/400,000*
PUERTO AZUL A/B*	150,000	170,000/Pls. call*
RIVIERA A/B*	-	230,000/400,000*
ROCKWELL CLUB	500,000	600,000
ROYALE TAGAYTAY A/B*	100,000	120,000/150,000*
SHERWOOD HILLS A/B*/C**	-	250,000/350,000*/450,000**
STA. ELENA GOLF CLUB	1,800,000	1,850,000
SUBIC BAY IND/CORP.*	400,000*	300,000/500,000 *
TAT FILIPINAS GOLF A/B*	320,000	350,000/550,000*
TAGAYTAY H-LANDS CC/GOLF*	-	400,000/850,000
TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS	-	780,000
VALLE VERDE IND.	185,000	190,000
VALLY GOLF	250,000	-
WACK WACK	8.0 M	8.5 M

Available Lessors for Playing Rights: Alabang, Calatagan, Camp John Hay, Canlubang, Canyon Woods, Celebrity, Eagleridge, Eastridge, Forest Hills, Makati Sports, Malarayat, Orchard, Riviera, Sta. Elena, Southwoods, Tagaytay H-lands & Midlands, Valley Golf, Wack Wack, Rockwell & Others

Selling: Villas, Belleview, Pinecrest & Woodlands in Tagaytay Highlands
Lots: Eagleridge, Forest Hills, Punta Fuego, Royale Tagaytay & Southwoods
Buying: Orchard Lot Phase 7

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GOLFERS
CLUB SHARES, INC.
SEC LICENSE # A 1998-2129
AS OF AUGUST 20, 2001

	SELLING	BUYING
1. ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB "A"	1,800,000	
2. ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB "B"	2,100,000	1,900,000
3. BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB	750,000	
4. CALATAGAN GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "A"	100,000	
5. CAMP JOHN HAY	350,000	
6. CANLUBANG GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	850,000	
7. CAPITOL HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	150,000	130,000
8. CELEBRITY CLUB	205,000	
9. COUNTRY CLUB AT TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS	400,000	
10. CLUB FILIPINO	250,000	
11. EASTRIDGE GOLF CLUB "A"	220,000	
12. EAGLERIDGE GOLF CLUB "A"	400,000	350,000
13. EVERCREST GOLF CLUB "A"	140,000	100,000
14. FAIRWAYS & BLUEWATER	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
15. FOREST HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "A"	250,000	230,000
16. FOREST HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "B"	280,000	
17. FOREST HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "C"	500,000	400,000
18. MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "A"	350,000	
19. MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "B"	450,000	
20. MANILA GOLF CLUB (IND.)	14,500,000	
21. MANILA POLO CLUB	3,300,000	
22. MANILA SOUTHWOODS GOLF CLUB "A"	750,000	
23. MANILA SOUTHWOODS GOLF CLUB "B"	900,000	
24. MANILA YACHT CLUB	650,000	
25. METROPOLITAN CLUB "A"	160,000	
26. METROPOLITAN CLUB "B"	170,000	150,000
27. MT MALARAYAT GOLF CLUB (IND.)	400,000	
28. ORCHARD GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "A"	250,000	
29. ORCHARD GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "B"	400,000	
30. ORCHARD GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "C"	550,000	
31. PUERTO AZUL BEACH CLUB	150,000	140,000
32. QUEZON CITY SPORTS CLUB	200,000	200,000
33. RIVIERA GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "A"	220,000	
34. RIVIERA GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "C"	350,000	
35. ROYAL NORTHWOODS	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
36. STA. ELENA GOLF CLUB "A"	1,900,000	1,800,000
37. SUBIC BAY YACHT CLUB (IND)	500,000	
38. TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS INT'L. GOLF CLUB	950,000	850,000
39. TAGAYTAY MIDLAND	800,000	750,000
40. VALLE VERDE COUNTRY CLUB	195,000	175,000
41. VALLEY GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	265,000	
42. WACK WACK GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	8,500,000	

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FINANCIAL RESTRUCTURING

AMCs not a quick-fix solution

By Doris C. Dumlao

FOUR years after the Asian currency turmoil blew up, the pace of financial restructuring in the Philippines and four other crisis-stricken countries in the region remains a big concern among investors.

Although Indonesia, Thailand and South Korea had far bigger problems than the Philippines, their decision to create centralized asset management companies significantly brought down their banking system's non-performing-loan ratios. In contrast, the Philippines and Malaysia saw an increase in their NPL ratios.

The Asian Development Bank emphasizes, however, that the level of bad loans in a country's financial system is an inaccurate indicator of how successful a financial restructuring is.

"While NPLs have fallen because some debts have been restructured and voluntary servicing of previously impaired loans has recommenced, a significant part of the reduction in a banking system's NPLs reflects the transfer of problem loans from banks' balance sheets to AMCs," the ADB said.

If the NPLs still held by AMCs are added to those in the banking system, the ADB says the picture within the region will still be "much less promising." If this is the case, it says, Indonesia's NPL ratio will be recorded at 60 percent, Thailand at 27 percent, and South Korea and Malaysia at 14 and 20 percent.

Slow pace of restructuring

The ADB warns that the high level of bad loans among crisis-hit countries in Asia reflects the slow pace of disposal of assets by AMCs. Malaysia has been an exception. Its AMC, Danaharta, has so far disposed of three-fourths of the assets it has acquired.

In South Korea, asset disposal has had some progress, but half of the assets acquired by Korea Asset Management Corp. have yet to be sold. In Indonesia, while more than 80 percent of the banking system's NPLs have been transferred to the Indonesian Bank Restructuring Agency, only a small proportion has been disposed of.

Thailand's private banks have set up their own AMCs, while the new Thai administration has announced its intention to create a centralized AMC that will carve out $28 billion worth of impaired loans from state and private banks.

The Philippines is also considering a centralized AMC, although the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has made it clear that the government will not bail out any debt-laden companies. Big banks like Equitable-PCI Banking Corp. and Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co. are planning to set up their own AMCs.

Besides the slow pace of asset disposal by AMCs, another recent aspect of the NPL problem is the growing number of previously restructured loans again being classified as "non-performing," which suggests that a lot of companies are still finding it difficult paying their debts despite getting softer terms.

Lagging indicator

The ADB reported that with the exception of Indonesia, capital adequacy ratios of Southeast Asia's commercial banks exceeded the 8-percent Basle norm. In this aspect, the Philippine banking system led the way with a capital adequacy ratio of more than 15 percent, while Korea, Malaysia and Thailand all exceeded 10 percent. AMCs in Korea and Malaysia have made a profit.

In Indonesia, the capital adequacy ratio among seven banks that have been recapitalized with the assistance of IBRA was below 11 percent as of March. The country is hoping to bring it down to 8 percent for the whole banking system by year's end.

As in the case of NPL ratios, the ADB said the reported capital adequacy ratios should be used with caution in judging banking sector health.

"More often than not, capital adequacy ratios tend to be lagging rather than leading indicators of financial robustness. Besides, it is not clear that a capital adequacy ratio in excess of 8 percent provides adequate protection against the risks that banks in emerging markets face," it said.

As such, the ADB said proposals contained in the New Basle Accord, published on Jan. 16 this year, encouraged regulators in emerging markets to set minimum capital standards in excess of 8 percent on a bank-by-bank basis, where risk profiles so warranted.

The ADB said profitability of banks, as measured by the average return on equity, generally improved among countries hit by the currency crisis. Despite this improvement, however, it noted that banking sector profitability continued to be negative in South Korea. The returns on equity in Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand was positive but were still below pre-crisis levels.

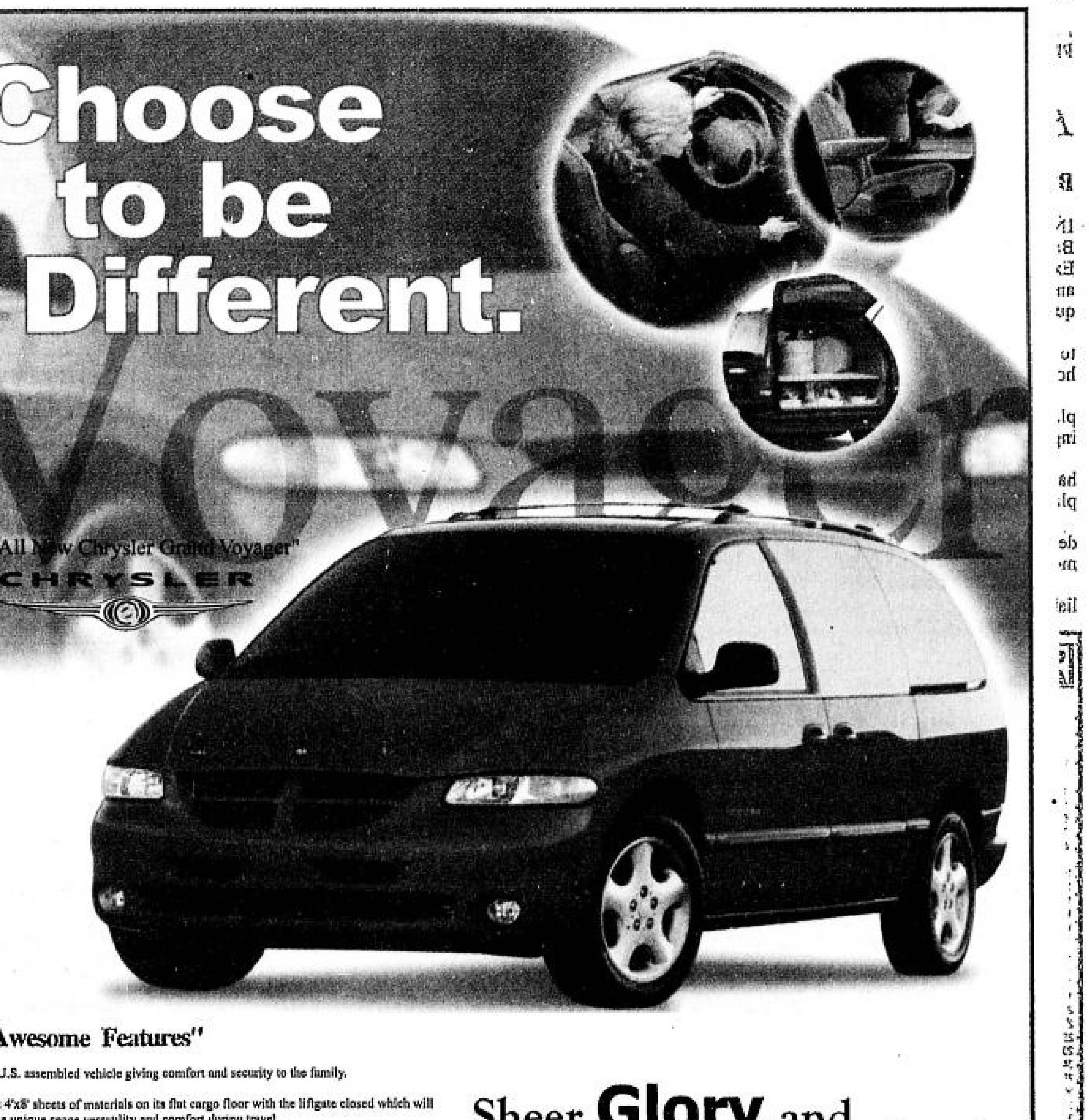
"However, the fact that some banks are gradually returning to profitability suggests that margins are improving, with creditworthy borrowers paying off their debts. Going forward, this should eventually augur well for balance sheet strength," the ADB said.

Constraints to restructuring

To complete the rehabilitation process, the ADB said the task of financial sector restructuring should always be intertwined with the task of restructuring corporate and other debts.

"In general, the crisis countries have gone some way toward reducing their excessive debt-equity ratios while rescheduling debt and lengthening the maturity of corporate debt. But the pace of corporate restructuring has been slower than that seen in the financial sector," it said.

"In most countries, the operational restructuring of troubled businesses has not kept pace with the restructuring of their financial obligations. Ultimately, an improvement in debt servicing capacity requires a return to operational profitability. Progress in operational restructuring of the corporate sector has generally been patchy in all five crisis countries," it said.



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Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

DISBURSEMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY AND TO BID

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) will conduct a prequalification of prospective bidders for the supply and installation of the following item:

1 Unit Centrifugal Water Chiller, water cooled, Trane band or approved equivalent, with rated capacity of 500 tons of refrigeration, 460 volts, 3-phase, 60Hz, low kilowatt power input, high efficiency using HFC134a refrigerant, based on chilled water temperature of 42F/54F and condensing chilled water temperature of 88F/98F, complete with the following:

a) Direct-drive compressor-motor assembly (Hermetic Type)
b) Shell and tube evaporator and condenser
c) Unit-mounted Microprocessor based control panel
d) Unit-mounted Y-D starter with ammeter and voltmeter
e) Flow switches
f) Initial charge of HFC134a refrigerant and oil

For prequalification purposes, interested bidders shall submit to the Disbursement Control Committee thru the Administrative Services Department, Room 212, 2nd Floor, 5-storey building, BSP Complex, Malate, Manila, Tel. Nos. 525-0048, 523-6427 not later than September 3, 2001 to the following requirements:

1. If the bidder is not the manufacturer, a certification from the manufacturer that the bidder is an authorized local distributor and service company of the offered brand of chiller; and
2. Brochure(s) of the item(s) to be offered for evaluation purposes.

The above requirements, together with photocopies of documents listed below (original copies of items 1 and 2 to be presented for authentication purposes) shall be submitted to the Disbursement Control Committee thru the Administrative Services Department at the abovementioned address:

1. Articles of Incorporation and Business Registration Papers of the bidder;
2. 2000 audited Financial Statements (Balance Sheet and Income Statement) of the bidder;
3. 2000 Income Tax Return of the bidder; and
4. Company history/profile of the bidder.

Only those who comply with the above requirements and are prequalified by the Bank will be invited to participate in the actual bidding which will be conducted on a later date to be advised to prequalified bidders.

The two envelope system shall be adopted in the bidding.

The BSP hereby reserves the right to reject any or all bids, as well as to waive any defects or informality in such bids, and to accept such bids as may be considered most advantageous to the Bank.

FOR THE DISBURSEMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

(Sgd.) EDUARDO L. MAGAHIS
Officer-In-Charge
Administrative Services Department

(PDI – August 21, 2001)

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Armed Forces of the Philippines invites interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid for the ***UPGRADE OF ONE (1) BRITTEN NORMAN ISLANDER-2A FIXED WING AIRCRAFT*** of the Philippine Navy with an approved budget of ***Twenty Five Million Pesos (Php 25,000,000.00)*** under the **AFP Modernization Program.**

Only bids from entities authorized by the appropriate civil aviation authority which make, develop, fabricate, assemble, build, or otherwise product the BN Islander shall be entertained

Eligibility/Bid documents will be available for issuance starting ***August 21, 2001*** during office hours at the BAC Secretariat, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Capability, Materiel and Technology Development, J9, AFP, 3rd Floor, Bulwagang Mabini, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City upon payment of ***Ten Thousand Pesos (Php 10,000.00)*** which is not refundable. The form of payment will be in cash or cashier's check in favor of the AFP Modernization Act Trust Fund.

A Special Power of Attorney, issued by the prospective Bidders authorizing its representative to purchase the bid documents in its behalf, shall be required before issuance of the bid documents.

A Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled on ***September 4, 2001*** at ***2:00 PM*** *(local time)* at the *Armed Forces of the Philippines Commissioned Officers Club (AFPCOC), Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City.* Bidders are required to submit their queries in writing to the BAC Secretariat seven (7) days prior to the Pre-Bid Conference.

The Bidder shall be allowed to inspect the BN Islander Aircraft and Naval Air Group facilities upon purchase of bid documents until the deadline of submission of the First Stage envelopes.

Deadline for submission of Eligibility/Bid Documents (First Stage) is on ***September 26, 2001*** at ***9:00 AM*** *(local time)* and followed by the Opening of Bids at ***10:00 AM*** at the *Armed Forces of the Philippines Commissioned Officers Club (AFPCOC) Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City.*

The Armed Forces of the Philippines reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive deficiencies embodied therein without assuming any obligation whatsoever for any expenses or losses that may be incurred by the bidder in the preparation of the bid.

FOR THE CHAIRMAN, BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE (BAC):

(Sgd.) **ERNESTO H. DE LEON**
Commodore, AFP
Vice-Chairman, BAC

(PDI--Aug. 20 & 21, 2001)

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NOTICE

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Notice is hereby given that the application of VILLAMAR CONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION with office address at Magdalena Building, Rizal Street, Poblacion, Baliuag, Bulacan for registration with the Board of Investments under Book I of the Omnibus Investments Code of 1987, otherwise known as E.O. 226, as Amended, as New Operator of Tourist Accommodation Facilities (Resort) at a capacity of 30 rooms and with project location at DRT Highway, Ulingao, San Rafael, Bulacan has been officially accepted on August 15, 2001 and is currently being processed.

Any person with valid objections to or pertinent comments on the above-mentioned application may file his/her objection, in writing under oath, with the BOI within one (1) week from the date of publication.

Issued this 15th day of August 2001.

(Sgd.) **C.O. ANGELES**
Director
Legal Services Department

(PDI – August 21, 2001)

PUBLIC NOTICES

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St. Jude, worker of miracles, helper for the helpless, pray for us.

Say nine times a day for nine days. Prayer will be answered by the eighth day, it has never failed.

Thank you very much, Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and St. Jude, for favor granted.

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE - CARFU
Cordillera Highland Agricultural Resource Management Project
Sto. Tomas Road, Baguio Dairy Farm, Baguio City
Tele/Fax Nos. 444-7994, 444-8329
PO Box 1158
E-Mail: charm@mozcom.com

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

1. The Republic of the Philippines has received a loan from the Asian Development Bank in various currencies toward the cost of the Cordillera Highland Agricultural Resource Management (CHARM) Project and intends to apply part of the proceeds including GOP funds to eligible payment under the contract for which this Invitation to Pre-Qualify and to Bid the following:
   a. Provision of Satellite Images and Services
2. Requirements for Pre-Qualification:
   a. Letter of Intent
   b. Detailed Profile of the Firm
   c. Business Permit/Clearances
   d. DTI Registration
   e. Latest Income Tax Return
   f. Latest Financial Statement
   g. VAT/Non-VAT Registration
3. Issuance of Guidelines for Pre-Qualification shall be on **August 27, 2001**.
4. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information at the Project Support Office of CHARM Project, Sto. Tomas Road, Baguio Dairy Farm, Baguio City at telephone numbers (074) 444-7994, (074) 444-8329 and SPCMAD, Room 302, Department of Agriculture, Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City at telephone numbers (02) 927-9636 to 39.
5. Submission of Pre-Qualification papers should not be later than **5:00 PM** on **September 3, 2001** at CHARM PSO, Baguio City. Invitation to bid shall be issued to shortlisted firms on **September 17, 2001**.

   Bid documents will be available to pre-qualified or shortlisted firms on **September 19, 2001** and a Pre-Bid Conference will be held on **September 21, 2001, 2:00 PM** at the CHARM PSO Conference Room and the Opening of Bids will be on **October 5, 2001, 2:00 PM** at CHARM PSO Conference Room.
6. Bidders bond equivalent to 2.5% of the total bid price in the form of cash or cashier's/manager's check must be submitted together with the bid.
7. CHARM Project reserves the right to reject any or all bids or any part thereof, waive any defect contained therein and accept offers most advantageous to the Project.

(Sgd.) **EDMUND J. SANA**
DA Assistant Secretary and SPBAC Chairman

(PDI – Aug. 18, 19 & 21, 2001)

Republic of the Philippines
Supreme Court
Manila

INVITATION TO BID

Interested suppliers/dealers are invited to pre-qualify and bid for the supply and delivery of various Office and Printing supplies and materials for Property Division and Printing Services stock.

Bids of pre-qualified bidders will be received by the Secretariat, Committee on Bids, Supreme Court of the Philippines, Taft Avenue, Manila on or before 2:00 p.m. on **September 12, 2001**. At said time and date, sealed quotations submitted will be opened publicly by the Committee on Bids in the presence of the participating bidders and/or representatives at the 2nd Floor Centennial Building, Supreme Court.

Interested bidders may obtain necessary pre-qualification requirements from the Secretariat, Committee on Bids, Office of the Administrative Services, Supreme Court, which should be submitted not later than 2:00 p.m. on **September 5, 2001**. A Pre-bid conference of qualified bidders will be held at 2:00 p.m. on **September 7, 2001** at the 2nd Floor Centennial Building, Supreme Court.

Proposal forms, Terms and Conditions and list of office supplies subject of this particular bidding will be furnished to pre-qualified bidders, after payment of a non-refundable P100.00 fee.

The Committee on Bids reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defects or informalities therein, or accept any bid/s or offer/s which it may consider to be advantageous and beneficial to the government.

August 17, 2001

(Sgd.) **JOSE P. PEREZ**
Chairman
Committee on Bids

(PDI - Aug. 21, 2001)

Department of Environment and Natural Resources
NATURAL RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
8th Floor DENR by the Bay Bldg., 1515 Roxas Blvd., Ermita, Manila, Phils.
☎ 5219421*5219463*5226632*5227531*5227529*5227533
*5227528*5244189*5244203*5244205*5244184
Fax No. 5219466

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND SUBMIT PROPOSALS

The Natural Resources Development Corporation (NRDC) invites interested parties in the harvesting/extraction by way of sanitation cutting of all standing dead and diseased falcata trees to pre-qualify and submit proposals for the 8.47 hectare plantation area with an estimated total volume of 500.51 cubic meters located at Cayamcam, Tungawan, Zamboanga del Sur. Interested parties are required to submit the following requirements at the NRDC, 9/F 1515 Roxas Boulevard, Ermita, Manila:

1. Certified copy of the Certificate of Registration of Business Name with Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) or Certificate of Registration with Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC);
2. Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws or Articles of Co-partnership;
3. List of Names of Current Stockholders/Partners and Directors of the Corporation/Partnership as certified by the Corporate and/or Board Secretary;
4. A valid Wood Processing Plant Permit and/or Log Dealer's Permit and Log Supply Agreement;
5. Duly notarized Board Resolution as duly certified by the Corporate Secretary authorizing the official representative(s) of the Company to transact business in behalf of the Company;
6. Duly Audited Financial Statements for the last three (3) years; and
7. List of subsidiaries and sister companies as duly notarized and certified by the Corporate Board Secretary.

Deadline for the submission of the above pre-qualification requirements shall be at the close of office hours on **August 28, 2001**.

Bidders shall be notified on the results of the pre-qualification evaluation after which they shall be provided with project prospectus on the technical details in the preparation of Technical and Financial Proposal including the indicative Plan. The project prospectus, rules on bidding procedures and other pertinent information shall be acquired by pre-qualified applicants upon payment of P2,000.00 non-refundable application fee.

Pre-qualified applicants must be able to prove their track record of experience, technical and financial capability to perform the works/services called for. The deadline for the submission of the Technical and Financial Proposal shall be at the close of office hours on **September 6, 2001**. Pre-bidding conference shall be conducted on **September 13, 2001**, 10:00 AM at the NRDC Conference Room.

Qualified bidders must submit their sealed bids on or before the Opening of Bid on **September 14, 2001**, 10:00 AM, same venue.

Automatic rebidding will be conducted on **September 20, 2001** in case of failure in bidding due to insufficient number of participating bidders, non-complying bids, etc.

For further clarification, interested parties may inquire at the NRDC Office through telephone numbers 521-9421, 521-9463, 522-6632, 522-7531 and 522-7529.

The NRDC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any formalities in connection thereto and accept such bids it may consider as most advantageous to the Corporation.

(Sgd.) **ATTY. DIOGENES S. FERREZ**
BAC Chairman

(PDI – Aug. 19, 20 & 21, 2001)

People, Events & Products

ARIES B. ESPINOSA, Assistant Editor

PMA services marketing seminar

THE PHILIPPINE Marketing Association (PMA) is conducting the first ever Services Marketing Seminar on Aug. 21, 22 and 24, 1 to 6 p.m. at Acceed, AIM Conference Center in Makati City. The Services Marketing Seminar aims to provide essential knowledge and significant insights to executives and businessmen engaged in the marketing of services. PMA has assembled a formidable line-up of resource speakers who will facilitate relevant lectures and discussions on services marketing. Topics for discussion are: introduction to the concept of services marketing, internal operations of a service firm, customer intimacy and relationship marketing, external operations of a service firm, and gauging the effectiveness of your services marketing campaigns. Call the PMA Secretariat at 892-3144, 692-0978 and 892-3261 (telefax) or e-mail pma@philonline.com

PGLL 20th year seminar

THE PHILIPPINE Group of Law Librarians Inc., (PGLL) is celebrating its 20th anniversary. To celebrate this occasion, a three-day seminar will be held on Aug. 22 to 24 at the Pearl Manila Hotel, UN Avenue corner Taft Avenue, Manila (in front of the NBI). The seminar on "Law Libraries: Facing the Challenges on Research" includes topics on the latest E-Commerce Act and the rules on electronic evidence, environmental protection, gender and development, women's rights, children and family law. SC Justice Flerida Ruth P. Romero, the authority on family law, women and children will be the keynote speaker. For details, call Mila (SC) 521-7223, 524-2706; e-mail sclib@supreme court.gov.ph; Girlie (OSG) 818-6301 local 256; fax 812-9972; Shirley (DOJ) 524-9740.

Davao hosts book fair

THE ASSOCIATION of Booksellers for the Academe and the Professions (ABAP) is holding the 4th Academic Book Fair from Aug. 21-24 at the Royal Mandaya Hotel, Davao City. Visitors have 24 booths to visit and see a variety of books that cover almost all areas of discipline-from children's books to professional titles–as well as a wide array of Filipiniana materials. An added feature of the book fair is the holding of seminars for teachers and librarians. For inquiries, call Edith Ibanez, librarian, DECS Region XI, F.Torres Street, Davao City, at (082) 227-0941 and Ligaya Marquez, Holy Cross College of Davao, (082) 221-9074 local 29.

INQUIRER TRIVIA

By BONG BARRAMEDA

Gray matter

Q. Is the human brain really gray in color?

A. Partly. The cortex, the brain's outer layer, is a convoluted, glistening gray-white substance about one-eight of an inch thick, and holds billions of nerve cells arranged in six layers. The convolutions are made up of ridgelike bulges, known as gyri, separated by small grooves called sulci and larger grooves called fissures. The extensive convolutions enable a very large surface area of brain cortex – about 1.5 m^2 (16 ft^2) in an adult – to fit within the cranium. The cortex is home to the brain's higher functions, the area concerned with thought, sensations and movement. Beneath the gray matter of the cortex lies white matter, tracts of thin nerve-cell fibers, which project like tails. These tracts link various areas of the gray matter to one another and to nerve centers elsewhere in the brain and the brain stem.

Ooops! Contrary to still prevalent belief, fish is not "brain food." Most people who still believe that attribute it to B-complex vitamins in fish, but originally it was attributed to phosphorus. Although fish have some of each, there are many foods that have much more. The brain is a complicated organ and requires a wide range of minerals and vitamins to function: there is no specific "brain food."

Past Forward. This day in 1983: Benigno Aquino, Jr., was assasinated at the Manila International Airport after returning from a three-year sojourn in the United States.

WORD WATCH

Cynosure (sin'uh shoor, sign'uh shoor) : any person or thing that is a center of attention or interest.

PDI – Aug. 21, 2001

REPUBLIKA NG PILIPINAS
PAMBANSANG PANGASIWAAN NG PATUBIG
(NATIONAL IRRIGATION ADMINISTRATION)
TANGGAPAN NG REHIYONAL NA PATNUGOT NG PATUBIG
REHIYON BLG. 6, LUNGSOD NG ILOILO

INVITATION FOR PREQUALIFICATIONS AND TO SUBMIT BIDS CONSTRUCTION OF DIVERSION WORKS OF MAAYON CIP

Maayon, Capiz
Contract No. El Niño R6-C-4

The National Irrigation Administration, Regional Office 6, Iloilo City is inviting qualified contractors who are registered and classified by the Construction Industry Authority of the Philippines and the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board preferably based in Iloilo and Capiz to prequalify and to submit bids for the Construction of Diversion Works of Maayon CIP, Maayon, Capiz.

The Proposed Scope of Work shall involved but shall not be limited to the following:

	Items of Work	Estimated Quantity	Unit		Items of Work	Estimated Quantity	Unit
1.	Temp. works & Mob. of Constn. of Equipt.	L.S.		6.	Filter Drain	8	Cu.m.
2.	Diversion & Care of River	L.S.		7.	Rock Excavation (Mech)	850	Cu.m.
3.	211 KGSM Reinf. Concrete	665	Cu.m.	8.	Structure Excavation (Mech)	28,500	Cu.m.
4.	Rubble Masonry w/ 169 Concrete Binder	2,530	Cu.m.	9.	Structure Backfill (Mech)	22,670	Cu.m.
5.	Reinf. Steel Bars			10.	5cm dia x 6m G.I. Pipe		L.S.
5a.	Cutting Bending, Placing & etc.	29,900	Kgs.	11.	Steelgate	2	Units
5b.	Furnishing & Stockpiling	29,900	Kgs.				

Estimated Budget for the project = P21.0M
Estimated Contract Duration = 600 Calendar Days

Requirements for prequalifications are as follows:
1. IAC Category = Medium "B" for Irrigation and Flood Control
2. Credit Line = Ten percent (10%) of the Estimated Project Cost
   Prospective Bidders are required to use NIA supplied forms.
   All other forms will not be accepted and will be rejected outright
3. Proof of ownership for the minimum equipment requirement
4. Other requirements that maybe made by the NIA-PBAC in conformity with the latest amendments of the Implementing Rules and Regulations of PD 1594, as amended and NIA MC #21, series 1997, guidelines in the Implementation of Local Minor Contract.

The minimum equipment requirement which must be owned are as follows:

	TYPE OF EQUIPT.	CAPACITY	NUMBER		TYPE OF EQUIPT.	CAPACITY	NUMBER
1.	Dump Truck	6-8 Cu.m.	3	5.	Concrete Mixer	1 bagger	4
2.	Bulldozer	85-114 HP	1	6.	Concrete Vibrator	3-5 Hp	2
3.	Loader	160-200 HP	1	7.	Water pump	100 mm dia	4
4.	Backhoe (Hydraulic Excavator)	0.35-0.45 Cu.m.	1				

Pre C Forms shall be made available to illegible and interested contractors upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P350.00 and upon submittal of a Letter of Intent addressed to:

The Chairman
Prequalification, Bids and Awards Committee
National Irrigation Administration, Regional Office 6
Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City

Relevant and tentative schedule for the conduct of this bidding are as follows:
Issuance of Pre-C Documents = August 8 to 24, 2001
Deadline of Submission of duly accomplished PRE-C Documents = August 28, 2001
Pre-Bidding conference = September 13, 2001 Regional Office Conference Room, 9:00 a.m.
Issuance of Plans and Bid Documents = September 14, 2001 (Cost cat P500.00/set, non-refundable)
Opening of Bids = September 28, 2001 Regional Office Conference Room, 9:00 a.m. (Dropping of Bids will be from 8:00 to 9:00 a.m. at the same time and place)

Site Inspection maybe arranged with the Provincial Irrigation Officer of Capiz, PIO, Mambusao, Capiz anytime but preferably before the pre-bidding.

Prospective contractors are likewise required to attend the Pre-bidding conference as compulsory requirements and non-refundable means outright disqualification from participating on this bidding.

The NIA reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defects or infirmities therein, or accept the bids most advantageous to the Agency.

Finally, the NIA assumes no obligation or responsibility in whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidder for any expense, or loss that may be incurred in connection with this bidding.

(Sgd.) **ARSENIO C. SALANIO**
PBAC, Chairman

NOTED:
(Sgd.) **FELIX R. FRANCISCO**
OIC-Regional Manager

(PDI - Aug. 20 & 21, 2001)

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Tels. 346-2543; 346-2601
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Nivel Hills, Lahug, Cebu City; Tels. 231-0721; 231-3192
COSMOPOLITAN FUNERAL HOMES, INC.
Camus Ext. cor. J. Abad Santos, Davao City; Tels. (082) 227-1201; 227-1258
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Tels. (047) 222-3605; (047) 811-1086; (047) 222-4512; (047) 224-2014
DON BOSCO CHAPELS
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Tels. 2812863; 2813034; 2810522
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No. 67 Pasig Boulevard Extension, Pasig City; Tels. 641-7909; 641-1735
M. Almeda St., Pateros, Metro Manila; Tels. 642-3010; 633-3602
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Calsadang Bago, Pateros, Metro Manila; Tels. 642-6181 to 82

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Tel. 722-2730; Cell (0917) 5680136; (0917) 5680145
Manila #23 Pato St., Project 2, Quezon City; Tel. 434-3258
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1501 C.M. Recto Ave. cor. T. Mapua, Manila; Tels. 711-6931 to 35; 732-4795
LA FUNERARIA PAZ, INC.
143 G. Araneta Ave. cor. Kaliraya St., Quezon City; Tels. 749-3806 to 11
LA FUNERARIA PAZ, INC.
79 Naguilian Rd., Baguio City; Tel. (074) 443-3337
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16-15 G. Tuazon cor. Loreto St., Sampaloc, Manila; Tels. 749-3679; 781-1772
ST. PETER FUNERAL HOMES
296 Quezon Ave., Quezon City; Tels. 372-5084; 410-9286/87
VERONICA MEMORIAL HOMES
Official NBI Morgue 517-A Arnaiz St., Pasay City
Tels. 831-3797; 844-7846; 843-1801; 845-4836

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS: ❶ Copy of Death Certificate ❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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MESSAGE OF THANKS

The family members of the late

AUGUSTO MARQUEZ ZABALLERO

who passed away on July 16, 2001

acknowledge with grateful appreciation the many kind expressions of sympathy and support extended to them in their hour of bereavement.

INQUIRER CLASSIFIEDS

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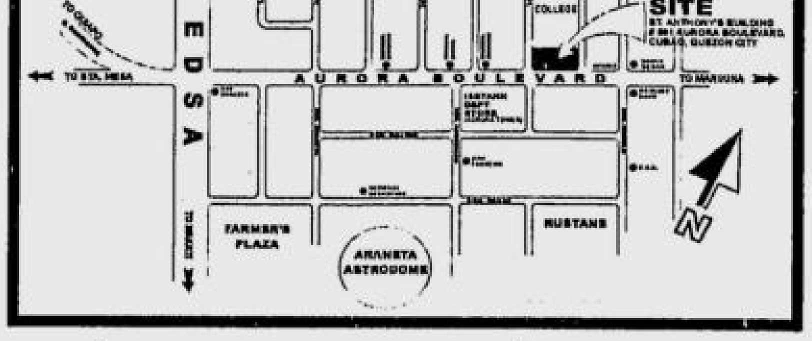


An appeal to GMA: Put a cap on interest rates

BY CHARLIE V. GORAYEB
National president, Chamber of Real Estate & Builders Associations

CREBA has come out with a paper crafted by lawyer Manuel M. Serrano, founder-chair, proposing to impose a fixed and reasonable ceiling on bank lending rates. The board adopted the Serrano document as its own humble contribution to current discussions on how to propel the economy forward.

The records show that the country's woes set in only when the tempering influence of the Anti-Usury Law was removed and interest rates were allowed to float freely, to the present range of anywhere from a low of 14 percent to a high of 36 percent during the "normal times." In other countries, governments strive to contain the rates at no more than 3 to 7 percent.

Attorney Serrano quotes what a leading economist said: "High interest rates permeates all levels of society with such corrosive effects. Due to high interest rates, the cost of all goods and services unduly spiral, the price of low-cost homes increase by three or four times their original costs. High interest shrinks markets, stifles the economy, discourages investments, rules inflation, decreases wages and income. It is responsible for increasing the deficits of government, the imbalance of trade, the cost of basic utilities—water, power, transport and others. "It tilts the balance widely in favor of the capital-rich foreign investors, to the chagrin and despair of local entrepreneurs, makes Philippine goods and services uncompetitive in the world market. Yes, high interest makes the American apples and oranges cheaper than Philippine mangoes and for that matter, many foreign goods over locally manufactured goods."

The Creba paper stresses that conversely, low interest rates mean lower prices of all goods, services and utilities. This in itself not only improves the peso's purchasing power, but it also enables businesses to generate cost-savings from which they can draw to meet the demand for increased wages. Just as importantly, improved purchasing power enables people to buy more of everything, thereby raising effective demand, which in turn sparks greater business activity and expansion. It is only when the millions of bread-earners are financially able to buy their needs may the country's produces continue to operate and provide.

Clearly, therefore, lowering interest rates is the key to a robust economy and, in turn, to social quietude and effective governance, the paper said. It is not wise nor practical, the Creba paper points outs, to leave the determination of interest rates entirely to the discretion of monetary authorities who are, after all, not infallible in their perceptions or predispositions, as shown, in several instances.

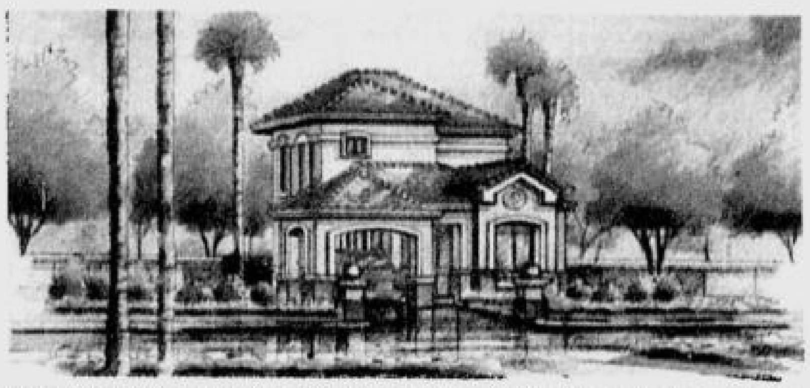
Neither is it tenable, with the country's flawed banking system, the Creba paper says, to allow the "free interplay of market forces" in determining the cost of money, when such so-called market forces are not entirely free—in view of the apparent existence, however publicly belied, of a banking cartel. To do so would perpetuate the present situation, where the entire economy is a helpless hostage to exploitative banking practices.

Nor should banks be allowed to unilaterally raise interest rates by simply invoking the so-called "demand-supply squeeze" allegedly caused by the government's competition with the private sector for credit. Such "squeeze" is in fact due to the preponderance of Dosri loans and corporate loans to the preferred giant conglomerates. It is bad enough that banks are allowed to practically dictate upon the government the rates it must pay for treasury bills.

Worse, when the government allows banks to set lending rates for private sector loans based on the present formula of a one percent to 7 percent spread over treasury bill rates, depending on whether the borrower is "prime" or "nonprime," it is in fact allowing these "prime" Dosris and conglomerates to enjoy unlimited credit at the cheapest rates, while at the same time condemning the "no"-prime" small and medium enterprises (SMEs)—already suffering as they are from extreme difficulties in availing of credit—to still pay the maximum price for what little of it is made available to them.

Attorney Serrano, in the Creba paper, says: "The folly of (the) government's extremely tolerant posture toward the excesses of the banking system becomes particularly disastrous in the fact of the banking practice of (1) applying any hike in interest rates not just on prospective loans, but also on those already existing or precontracted prior to such hike, under the standardized "escalation clause" in loan/mortgage agreements; and (2) imposing upon corporate borrowers the requirement for officers/stockholders to execute a "Joint and Solidarity Security" clause as additional loan security over and above the standard collateral in the event of foreclosure of the corporate loan.

These twin practices alone—considering that any sudden totally unforeseeable and unprogrammed rate hike could easily spell failure by the borrowers to meet the regular contracted obligations as they fall due, and any such delinquency would result not just in corporate bankruptcies but personal bankruptcies as well—are not just usurious but downright immoral if not illegal.



THE ARCHITECT'S perspective of one of the model homes at The Lakshore.

Lakeshore website online caters to overseas buyers

FILIPINO professionals overseas and those who still consider the Philippines their home are the growing market segment for a well-planned residential community such as The Lakeshore in Mexico, Pampanga.

These groups have expressed their preference to acquire and eventually reside away from the busy rat-racing urban centers like Manila after living in such a frenzied environment overseas.

The prospect of a relaxed, natural setting—open space, lake and a convivial neighborhood to live in with the modern amenities that they have been accustomed to—is the primary draw card for The Lakeshore's overseas Filipino market.

Reasons out a California-based Filipino resident: "Why should I go back to the hustle and bustle of daily living which is what we have here? How nice to know you can come home to the tranquility of a place like The Lakeshore? Sit by the lake, fish with my son, while my wife and daughter shop within the same complex, breathe fresh air and be surrounded by the chirping of birds and nature's wonders."

The 235-hectare The Lakeshore is a residential and commercial development designed in the style of California living. Owned and developed by the Central Country Estate Inc. (a consortium composed of Metro Pacific Corp., N.S. Mangio Development and Construction Corp. and Nobleman Properties), The Lakeshore has been a prime choice for US-based Filipinos.

To service the growing number of interested buyers from Filipino communities overseas, The Lakeshore has introduced its website. Designed as an easy reference but interactive website, inquiries can now be immediately responded to by The Lakeshore's marketing office.

SUPPORT FOR HOUSING

Speaker Jose De Venecia, right, has urged the National Home Mortgage Finance Corp. to step up its resource mobilization efforts to boost the impetus of President Macapagal-Arroyo's target of providing tenurial security for 150,000 households up to July of next year. The NHMFC, under the aegis of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, is primarily tasked to operate a secondary market for home mortgages. Also shown is NHMFC president Angelico T. Salud who welcomed De Venecia's support to the home finance agency in attaining its goals and targets.

A different investment package for Sta. Rosa Business Park

IS there a business venture today that is uncomplicated, risk-free, secured and high yielding?

Luis C. Monserrat, chair and chief executive officer of Property Partnerships Inc., will prove everyone wrong with a novelty product that negates the notion above. "With a modest 1.4 percent return on investment annually, it is an innovation of a residence hotel business under a concept called *'Communidades'* — Invest-Build-Own (IBO)," he disclosed.

But before going into the details, Monserrat explained the location as a vital component for success. He chose as site the Sta. Rosa Business Park in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, the country's new growth center about 40 kilometers south of Metro Manila via the South Luzon Expressway.

Sta. Rosa Business Park

Owned, developed and managed by Greenfield Development Corp., Sta. Rosa Business Park is a 300-hectare fully integrated, master-planned urban community comprising a light to medium industrial zone, residential, commercial and recreational areas.

The Greenfield Automotive Park, a Philippine Export Zone Authority-approved special economic zone, is part of the SRBP and home to Ford Motors Phils. The town of Sta. Rosa, dubbed by then Laguna Gov. and now Interior Secretary Joey D. Lina as "The Little Detroit outside the United States," hosts the plants of the world's top car manufacturers like Ford Toyota, Nissan, Isuzu and Honda.

The Paseo de Sta. Rosa (PDSR), SRBP's town center, is expanding following Greenfield's initial success in providing a mall service to the growing population in the contiguous area living in several upper- to middle-level subdivisions developed by Ayala Properties Inc., Crown Asia, Megaworld, Empire East and other big names in property development. Slated to commence next month, the PDSR's extension has Jollibee as its earliest locator.

Adjacent to the mall, Greenfield also launched last year the Sta. Rosa Country Market, a world-class wet and dry market as rated by visitors from Metro Manila, particularly Manila Mayor Lito Atienza during a recent visit. The market is currently serving the needs of the residents and the more than 60,000 workers employed by multinational companies like National Panasonic, Toshiba, Hitachi, Coca Cola and other industries located in nearby industrial parks.

"The Sta. Rosa Business Park will become the next 'Alabang.' Aside from being strategically located within nearby industrial zones in Cavite and Batangas, the area (SRBP) is surrounded by nearly a dozen golf courses frequented by officials of locator companies," claimed Monserrat.

THE PRAVIA Residence Hotel

But despite the inevitable conversion of the SRBP into a major business hub that serves as a gateway to the Cavite-Laguna-Batangas-Rizal-Quezon (Calabarzon) industrial growth corridor, he noted that efforts must be made to serve the growing but underserved need of corporate locator market for a world-class residence hotel in Sta. Rosa.

'Communidades'

Popularized in Spain, *Communidades* refers to the collective effort of individuals to invest, build and operate enterprises. At the SRBP, a residence hotel will be built under the Spanish concept.

The Pravia Residence Hotel, a world-class 9-story edifice comprised of 105 apartment units equipped with top-rate amenities, will rise at the SRBP to serve a neglected market in Calabarzon, Monserrat stated, explaining the venture will open an opportunity to select investors to own units at cost, i.e., without the standard profit of a developer, and rent them out at prevailing rates.

He assured a trustee bank (Union Bank) would administer all monies deposited in trust accounts under individual investors. When preagreed, the bank will only disburse funds to project contractors and suppliers. And if the project is aborted because the required number of investors is not fulfilled, the bank will return all funds to investors with interest, he added.

Monserrat said the average acquisition cost of a residential unit is P39,000 per square meter, comparatively cheaper than its equivalent structure in Alabang or Makati, which is pegged between P65,000 and P85,000 per square meter.

Modest rental rates are projected at P539 per square meter a month generating an income for a unit from a low of P19,695 to a high of P50,962 monthly, more than enough to cover a 10-year loan amortization from P15,596 to P40,355 or a 15-year ranging from P13,603 to P35,198 a month.

"Individuals risking some of their savings on the very volatile stock market and commodities or speculating on currencies will find our venture very feasible and secured. They will not only earn their money's worth and own a property but also help propel the economy by creating jobs and opportunities in the countryside," he stressed, adding that after PPI's recent signing with Greenfield more than 30 percent of Pravia have been reserved to date.

Monserrat's Hospitality International Inc., a firm that has been arranging quality alternatives for conventional hotels and resorts in the country, will provide management services to the SRBP's Pravia. He set up the PPI in close collaboration with the Cuervo family, a well-experienced and known entity in the real estate industry.

Apec engineers registry launched

THE PHILIPPINE Technological Council, the umbrella organization of technological professions in the country, has formally launched the Apec (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) Engineers Registry Philippines. In a press conference held recently at the Ambassador's Sala of Traders Hotel, PTC president Augusto Soliman announced the formal launch of the said project that was attended by heads of various associations in the technical profession.

Engineer Corazon Romero, the project's chairperson, said the primary thrust of the Apec Engineers Registry is to recognize the equivalencies in the qualification and experience of practicing professional engineers in the participating economies and to facilitate trade in engineers services between participating economies. The project will also help establish a strong cooperative network among engineering organizations in member economies.

Relative to this, there will be a forum of Apec engineers during the 2001 Engineering Exposition on Sept. 6, 7 and 8 at the Philippine Trade Training Center, Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Pasay City. The exposition, considered to be the largest gathering of technological and engineering professions, will showcase various engineering products and technologies available to the local Philippine industry. Conferences and seminars will also be featured during the event.

Together with the PTC, the other associations involved in organizing the 2001 Engineering Exposition are Philippine Welding Society, Society of Manufacturing Engineers, Maintenance Association of the Philippines (MA-Phil), Energy Management Association of the Philippines (Enmap), Original Equipment Manufacturing Engineers of the Philippines, Metalworking Industry Association of the Philippines and the Philippine Die & Mold Manufacturers Association of the Philippines. Puyat Steel Corp. and APC Philippines Inc. are sponsoring this big event.

For inquiries, please call up the PTC marketing arm, RVS Exposition & Conventions Specialists, at 561-7306, 427-8939 or (0917) 837-6303.

True Value paint clinic

AFTER THE SUCCESSFUL reopening of the True Value branch at Shangri-La Plaza Mall recently, True Value will host the first of a series of paint clinic sessions at their Alabang, Rockwell, Shangri-La and Cebu stores. True Value Philippines invited Dan Reed, TruServe paint consultant from the United States, to conduct the series of seminars.

Among the topics to be taken up by Reed are "Brushing up on Basics," "Surface Preparation," "Priming" and "Choosing the Best Applicators." A highlight of Reed's presentation will be on the transformative powers of Tru Test paints. There will also be a paint demonstration and an open forum, where Reed will answer questions from the seminar participants.

The paint clinic will be of much benefit to paint contractors, professional painters, students, housewives, hobbyists or anyone who needs to brush up on paint and paint applications.

The paint clinic's schedule is as follows: Aug. 22 (2-4 p.m.)—True Value Shangri-La, Mandaluyong; Aug. 23 (2-4 p.m.)—True Value Rockwell, Makati; Aug. 24 (2-4 p.m.)—True Value Alabang Town Center, Muntinlupa; Aug. 27 (2-4 p.m.)—True Value Ayala Center, Cebu.

The seminars are free of charge.

Cascades: A masterpiece of residential excellence

LANDSCAPE architects are gaining well-deserved attention over the past years as more knowledgeable architects or building designers have included their presence even at the planning stage of projects.

This was revealed by landscape architect Efren Aurelio, explaining that since he began 22 years ago, members of his profession "have had the bigger scope of work as this includes site planning, people circulation, environmental graphics, the engineering aspects of the landscape including drainage, lighting design, site grading and even participation in the formulation of policies involving environmental issues."

Aurelio said that in the first few years that he began his career, landscape architects were "taken late into a project to add on the 'cosmetics' of the development which are the trees and planting."

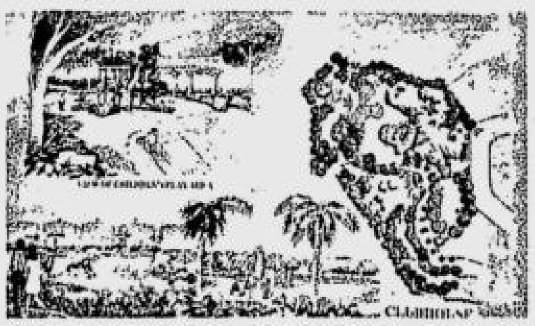
"Architects are now beginning to realize what major land developers like Crown Asia have known—landscape architecture can add value to their property," said Aurelio, the current president of the Philippine Association of Landscape Architects.

Aurelio's current project is the 9-hectare Cascades, the third phase of Cottonwood Heights—Crown Asia's premier subdivision in Antipolo City—with its American countryside-inspired ambience.

As the name implies, the design of the houses and the overall landscaping of Cascades were intended to reflect the effect of the movement of water in a waterfall.

With the magnificent hills and terrain of Antipolo City, Crown Asia tasked its engineers and contractors to develop the third phase of Cottonwood Heights while retaining the existing topography.

Following the contour of the land during development translated into retaining as much of the elements of the natural landscape, such as the hills and the trees, and incorporating these into the final plans for development. The result was the American-countryside ambience of Cottonwood Heights and Cascades where the natural beauty of the area was virtually untouched.



THE LANDSCAPE development plan for Cascades at Cottonwood Heights

The goal of retaining and preserving the terrain is also evident in the design of the houses that would be made available for Cascades. The seven house models available have been designed specifically to the terrain of Cascades, making each look as though it is a natural part of the surroundings.

The new house models—Abby, Beverly, Chelsea, Dorothy, Sigourney, Delaney and Undrey—with a minimum lot area of 180 square meters pegged at P3.5 to 6 million have been well-designed and carefully crafted to maximize the use of available living space.

Aurelio said that all design elements of Cascades, including the houses, are oriented toward reflecting and evoking the vision and motion of cascading waters.

"In fact we do get a cascading waterfall when it rains and the water runs through a small stream set in the middle of the property," Aurelio said.

Surrounding the stream are the clubhouse, a playground for kids, and what Aurelio describes as a "meandering footpath" that follows alongside the path of the stream. He added that the path is perfect not only for jogging but also for a casual stroll and a family picnic by the stream.

The playground provides an excellent view of the entire phase, as does the grass meadow and putting green just behind it.

Aurelio said that one key design element for the stream was the preservation of the natural formation of its embankments. "Instead of an unsightly rip-rap, which uses stones and cement, we decided to preserve and strengthen the banks, while adding small improvements to it so it will blend well with the overall design concept," he said.

"That is the essence of what we do, ensuring that all elements harmonize well so we have the best possible product, which in this is the 9-hectare expanse of Cascades at Cottonwood Heights," Aurelio said.

He said he hopes to further the idea of involving the landscape architects at the beginning of projects and get involved in the conceptualization from the ground up.

"I hope that we can continue educating our people, especially the developers and landowners, about the advantages of getting landscape architects for their projects," Aurelio said.

For more information about Cascades and the latest on Crown Asia's subdivisions and campaigns intended to give home buyers more value for their investment, please call 726-0083 to 84.

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Sa tulong ng pinasiglang "Community Mortgage Program," isang haligi ng programa sa abot-kayang pabahay, at kampanya ng pambansang pamahalaan laban sa kahirapan.

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'BUILD WHILE YOU WORK'

Toil abroad, build house here, pay later

BY TESSA R. SALAZAR

Imagine an overseas Filipino worker (OFW)—away for several years—returning to his or her native land only to realize that he or she doesn't even have a decent house to come home to.

Now, that is "homesickness" taken to a different level.

A Filipino entrepreneur has come to the aid of the true homesick overseas worker. Seeing how hard his fellow overseas workers in Europe toiled for their dreams of coming home, Butch Perez, in his Madrid-based firm SP Sabado Trading International S.L., has acted as the Filipino overseas workers' consultant, guarantor and overseer in their purchases of houses and lots in the Philippines. SP Sabado offers a housing loan program for OFWs that enables them to avail of credit lines from different Spanish banks. The credit line package is said to amount to 2 billion peseta (US$50 million). No Spanish bank would give out loans to OFWs individually.

Perez, a Filipino, was recently in the Philippines to reserve a new set of houses and lots at the St. Joseph Subdivision in Laguna for his clients and prepare the opening of SP Sabado's local office in the Commonwealth area in Fairview, Quezon City. The firm, MJSS marketing, would cater not only to OFWs' housing needs but also to their vehicle purchasing needs as well. By early next year, SP Sabado will open in Italy, a country Perez described as having a huge potential for his business.

Perez admitted that overseas workers abroad find it hard to save money and to get a loan from Philippine banks. Workers would almost always need collateral. He added they wouldn't even have time to arrange papers during their brief vacation trips home. This is where SP Sabado comes in.

The need is evident, and SP Sabado's offer seems to be welcome. In August 2001 alone, Perez estimated 10 housing loans have been reserved so far by OFWs. As of 2001, about 20 housing loans have been applied for.

SP Sabado's developer-partner in the country PA Alvarez Properties and Development Corp. develops housing subdivisions, particularly in San Pedro, Laguna. SP Sabado acts as PA Alvarez's marketing arm in Europe.

"We are already in phase 6 of St. Joseph's subdivision in Laguna. There are about 1,000 houses there, but not all were taken by OFWs." Perez said he would be back in November to arrange another housing development in Cebu.

Each OFW, he said, has an allowable housing loan ranging from P700,000 to P1 million payable in seven years. A loan of up to P1.5 million can be granted to an OFW couple. The interest is 8 percent per annum.

"Normally, it is the DH (domestic help) workers who avail of the loan. They (usually) earn about $700 a month and pay about $300 a month," Perez said. He added that the $300 per month loan payment is not considered heavy for OFWs, since they can expect an average yearly increase of $100 to their incomes.

All in all, 30 OFWs in Spain have availed of the housing loan. Houses for OFWs built with SP Sabado's assistance can be found in Pangasinan, Ilocos, Lucena and Antipolo. Perez said that other OFWs already have their own lots.

"We talk to OFWs and agree on specifications. We ask the architect's plan and then set foot in the Philippines to make their dream home," he said.

Perez added that he personally explains to OFWs the pros and cons of their desired homes, and helps them decide the right home at the right budget.

Perez started this business in 1997. Officially, however, his firm's Spanish license took effect two years ago.

SP Sabado has Spanish partners. "We have a group that processes bank applications. We do the processing of the loans in the banks," he said.

Perez first worked as a cook and driver for the president of the Barcelona Stock Market in 1987. In 1993 Perez discovered his gift for selling insurance working for British Life Insurance Co., now known as Norwich Union.

In just two months, he was the company's leading salesman in Spain. Despite setting up S.P. Sabado, Perez said that he has no plan to quit the insurance industry.

Perez said that his daily interaction with the Filipino community in Europe has kept him in touch with its needs.

Sta. Lucia gets safe water for Subic projects

STA. Lucia Realty & Development Inc. has recently signed a water supply franchise contract with Subic Water District for its projects located in Subic, specifically Club Morocco Resort and Residential Estate and Alta Vista Royale Residential Estate.

The signing led by SWD former chair Mary Posadas and current chair Victoria Israel and Sta. Lucia president and CEO Exequiel D. Robles and water engineering officials ensures ample and safe water for future residents of said property.

The memorandum of agreement dictates a new deep well for the two residential estates to compensate for the existing deep well.

The SWD will also inspect the internal pipeline network laid out by the developer and do hydro testing. For its part, Sta. Lucia will undertake completion of additional facilities such as the 200 cubic-meter reservoir and pumping equipment essential to the water system. After satisfactory compliance by the SLR and stringent inspection by the SWD, the day-to-day operations of managing the water supply system will be left to the care of the SWD.

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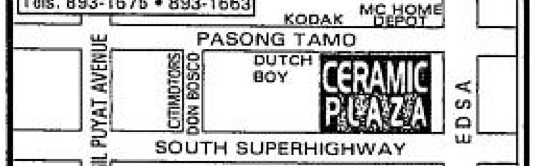

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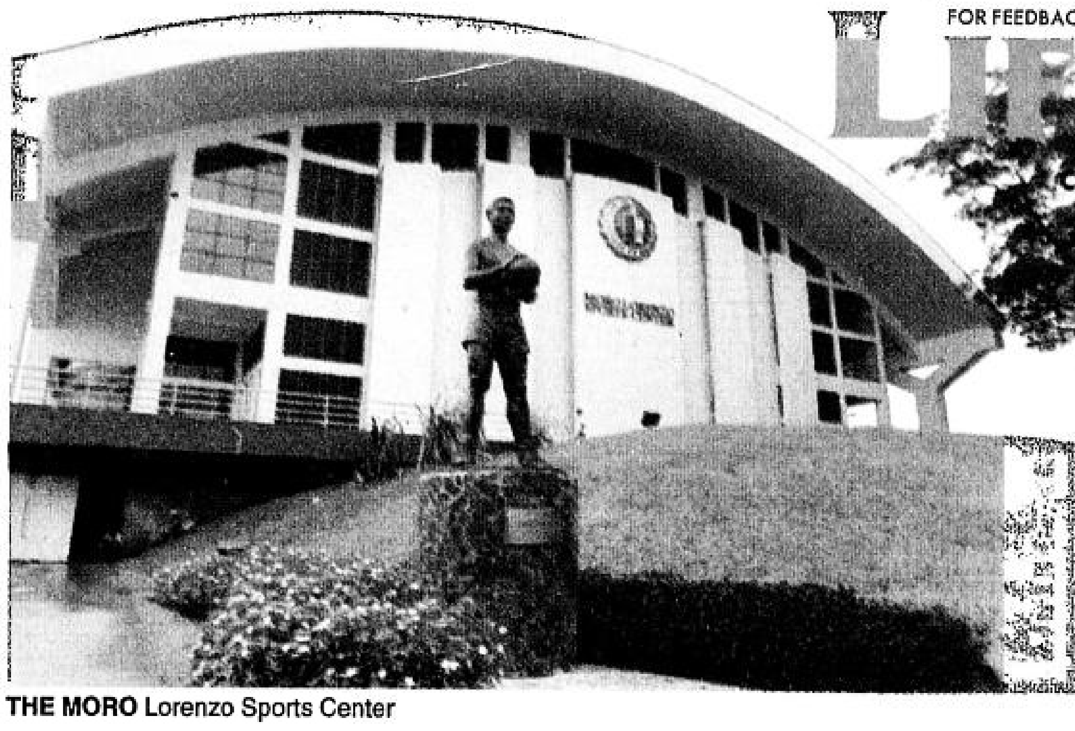

THE MORO Lorenzo Sports Center

Health and fitness hub opens its doors to Ateneo community

BY DAVID JOHN S. AGUILAR

There's a new state-of-the-art gym on Katipunan Avenue right on the Blue Eagles' campus

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HEALTH/ p.C3

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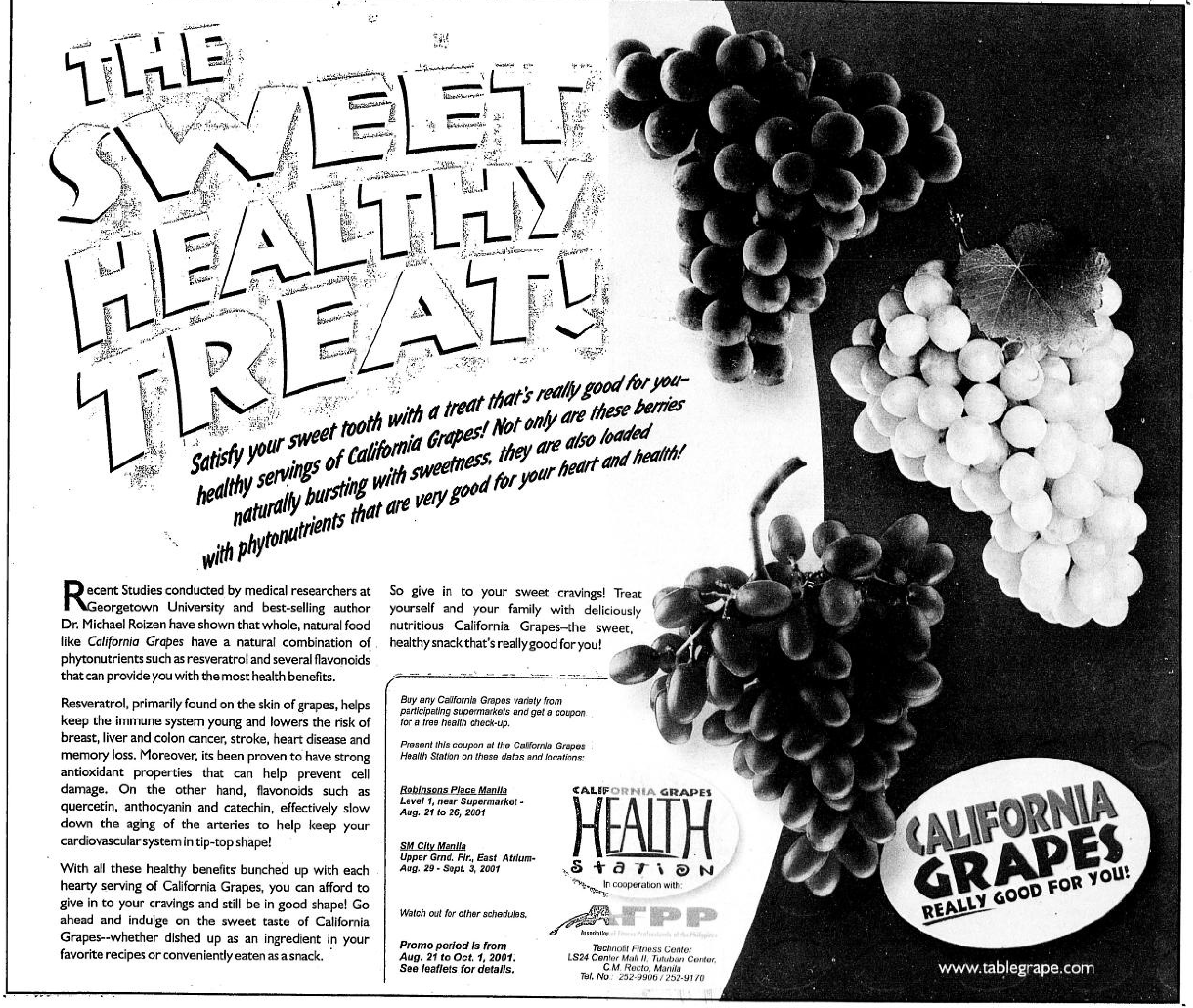

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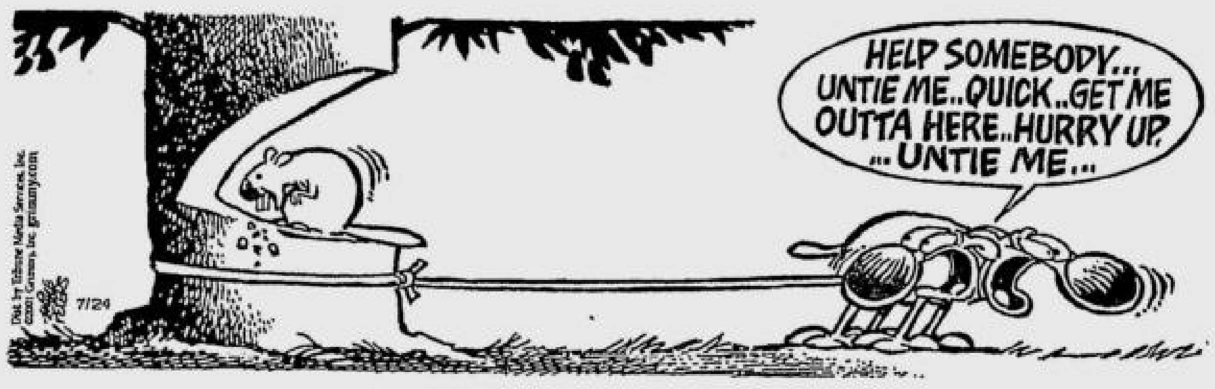
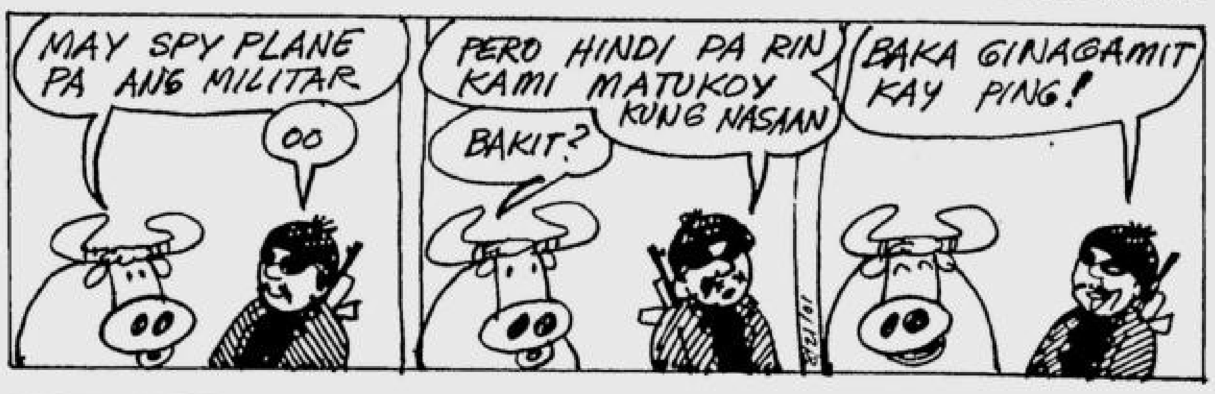
Asian Spirit
THE PEOPLE'S AIRLINE

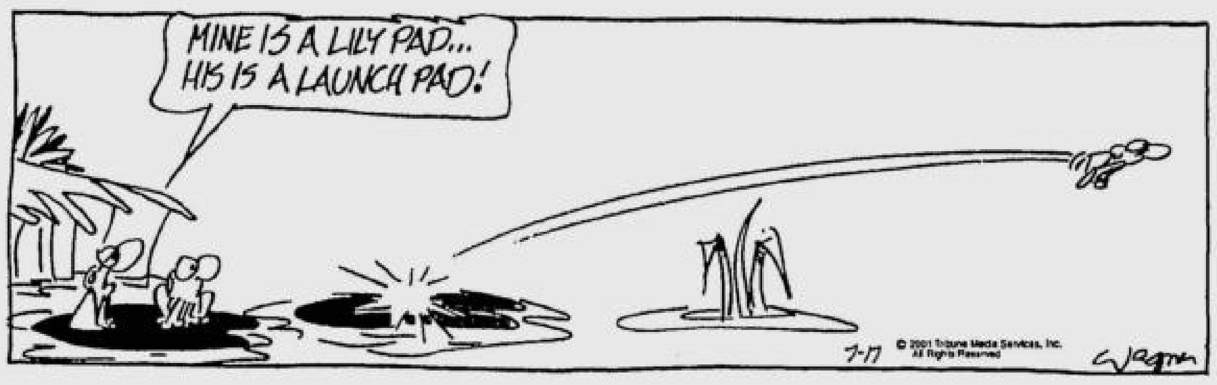
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM BY MIKE PETERS


HELP SOMEBODY... UNTIE ME..QUICK..GET ME OUTTA HERE..HURRY UP ...UNTIE ME...
7/24

A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


MAY SPY PLANE PA ANG MILITAR
OO
PERO HINDI PA RIN KAMI MATUKOY KUNG NASAAN
BAKIT?
BAKA GINAGAMIT KAY PING!

ANIMAL CRACKER BY FRED WAGNER


MINE IS A LILY PAD... HIS IS A LAUNCH PAD!
7-17
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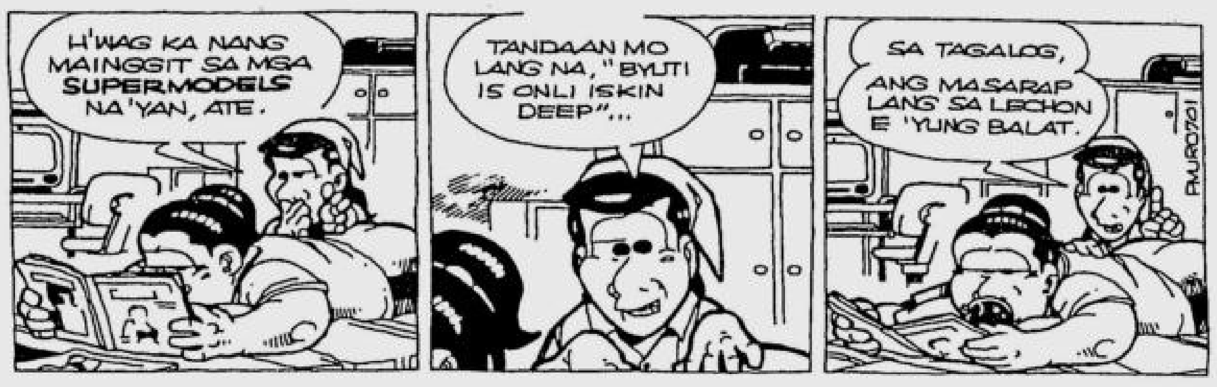
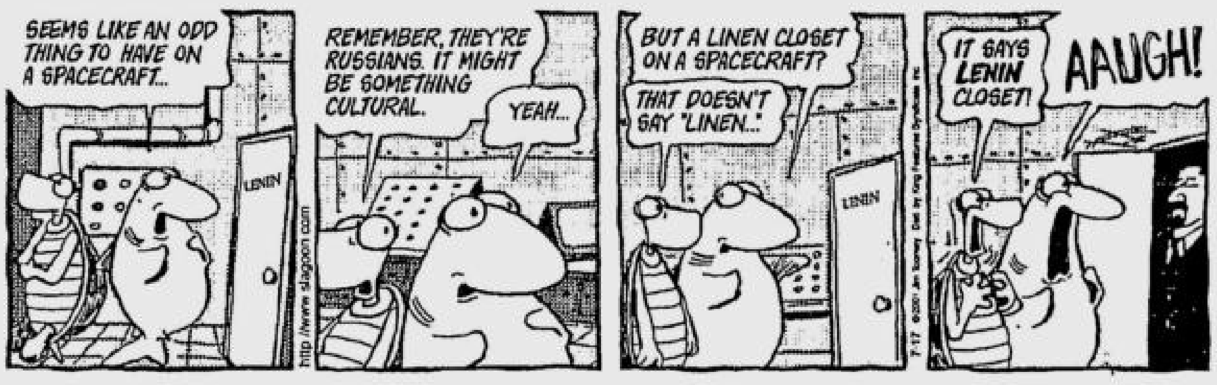
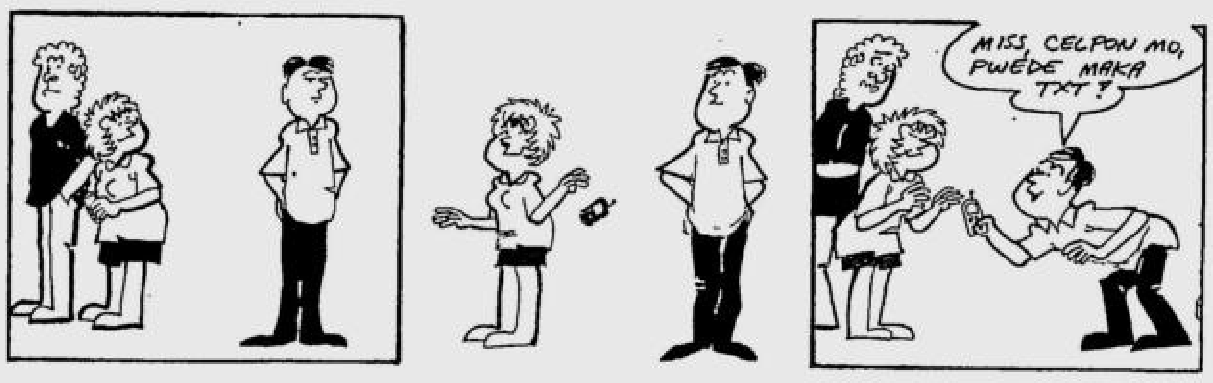
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


H'WAG KA NANG MAINGGIT SA MGA SUPERMODELS NA 'YAN, ATE.
TANDAAN MO LANG NA, "BYUTI IS ONLI ISKIN DEEP"...
SA TAGALOG, ANG MASARAP LANG SA LECHON E 'YUNG BALAT.

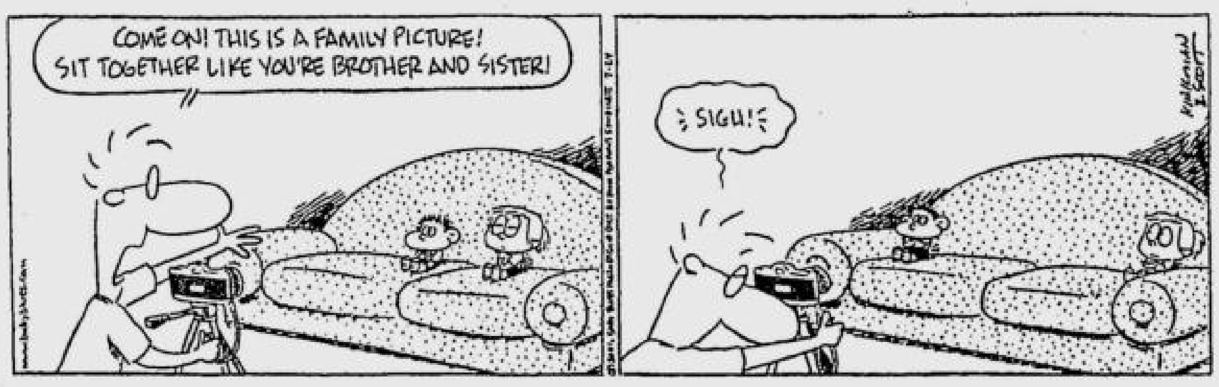
SHERMAN'S LAGOON BY JIM TOOMEY


SEEMS LIKE AN ODD THING TO HAVE ON A SPACECRAFT...
LENIN
REMEMBER, THEY'RE RUSSIANS. IT MIGHT BE SOMETHING CULTURAL.
YEAH...
BUT A LINEN CLOSET ON A SPACECRAFT?
THAT DOESN'T SAY "LINEN..."
IT SAYS LENIN CLOSET!
AAUGH!
http://www.slagoon.com

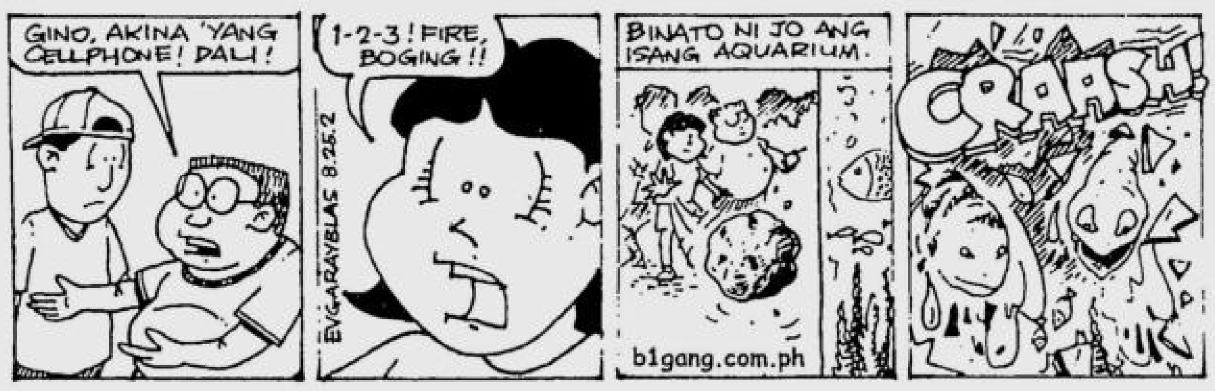
SIMO BY EDGAR DIONELA


MISS, CELPON MO, PWEDE MAKA TXT?

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


COME ON! THIS IS A FAMILY PICTURE! SIT TOGETHER LIKE YOU'RE BROTHER AND SISTER!
SIGH!

B1 GANG BY ATS11/ JEA/ FEVG


GINO, AKINA 'YANG CELLPHONE! DALI!
1-2-3! FIRE, BOGING!!
EVGARAYBLAS 8.25.2
BINATO NI JO ANG ISANG AQUARIUM.
b1gang.com.ph
CRASH!

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Wilt Chamberlain, Kenny Rogers, Princess Margaret, Jackie DeShannon, Kim Cattrall, Peter Weir, Alicia Witt

Happy Birthday: This will be an interesting year if you step into the limelight and focus on what you do best. It will be possible to prove yourself to those who may have doubted you in the past. It should be possible to muster up the kind of support you've been searching for. The opportunities will be plentiful if you are willing to take a chance. Your numbers: 3, 15, 19, 32, 45, 49

ARIES (March 21-April 19): You'll enjoy the day's feverish pace. Your high energy will allow you to move mountains, stir up all kinds of possibilities. You may want to put the pressure on those too willing to slack off.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Moneymaking opportunities are present. Look at all the angles and at those involved in the project before signing papers or making any irreversible commitment.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Prosperous real-estate deals can be made if you put plans into action today. Get busy making alterations to the house that will ensure the sales price you want.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Minor accidents will occur if you aren't thinking about what you are doing. You are likely to be preoccupied with matters pertaining to disagreements with peers.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): You may want to change career direction. Opportunities should be present if you keep your eyes open. Your ability to work diligently and focus on detail will assist in achieving your goals.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Organize your schedule carefully. Make sure you allow ample time to attend fitness classes. Being receptive to someone's overtures at social events will lead to love and romance.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Make those alterations to your living quarters that you've been talking about. You need a physical outlet to get some of that pent-up frustration out of your system.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Your heart is in the right spot. Greater involvement with children is likely. Helping the less fortunate will be satisfying and lead to rewards.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Keep your thoughts to yourself. Pushing opinions on others will lead to isolation. Friends or colleagues will not appreciate your attitude.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Become more involved in the project that your group was assigned. Hands-on efforts will not only be appreciated by your peers, but also bring recognition and advancement.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Take a look at your financial situation. Be careful not to pick unwise investments. Safe long-term ventures will ensure that you will have money to fall back on in years to come.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Your emotional life may be suffering if you have been playing with two potential partners' hearts. If you can't choose, at least be honest and refrain from leading either one on.

Birthday Baby: You will always look at the broad picture. You have great depth and can always see both sides of an issue. Although you can be patient, you will not be able to tolerate incompetence.

DAILY CROSSWORD

TMSPuzzles@aol.com

1	2	3	4	■	5	6	7	8	9	■	10	11	12	13
14				■	15					■	16			
17				18						■	19			
20						■	21			■	22			
■	■	■	23			24	■	25		26				
27	28	29					30				■	■	■	■
31				■	32			■	33		34	35	36	37
38				39	■	40		41	■	42				
43					44	■	45		46	■	47			
■	■	■	■	48		49				50				
51	52	53	54				■	55				■	■	■
56				■	57		58	■	59			60	61	62
63				■	64			65						
66				■	67					■	68			
69				■	70					■	71			

7/5/01

ACROSS
1 Farmland unit
5 Unbroken
10 Burn a bit
14 Milk byproduct
15 Tropical vine
16 Washed-out
17 Generosity
19 Elevator inventor
20 Easily attached accessory
21 Pullman or caboose
22 Ice unit
23 Shakespearean villain
25 Pilot's place
27 Giver of new life
31 __ the Red
32 Lair
33 "Abe Lincoln in Illinois" star
38 Cuba's Castro
40 Gain a lap
42 Marine mammal
43 Waffle
45 Youngster
47 Spoken
48 Daily dietary supplement
51 Set of kettledrums
55 Self-satisfied
56 A single time
57 Rapping Doctor
59 Non-rigid airships
63 Small isthmus
64 Aerial maneuver
66 End of switch?
67 Wrath
68 In __ of
69 Eyelid malady
70 Abrupt inhalations
71 Bridge coup

DOWN
1 Hole-making tools
2 Vandyke location
3 First name in country music
4 Jewelers' viewers
5 Used casual language
6 Lubricate
7 Non-cleric
8 Unaltered
9 Barracks rec area
10 "Star Trek" character
11 Enjoy with enthusiasm
12 Legal defense
13 VCR button
18 Horse shade
24 Raw minerals
26 Bird's crop
27 Umps' cohorts
28 Canal of song
29 Author of "The Immoralist"
30 Baker or Pointer
34 Some clerks
35 New Delhi dress
36 Israeli airline
37 Holler
39 Volcanic flow
41 Cruise and Conti
44 Blowhard
46 Wood sources
49 Albanian capital
50 Void's partner?
51 Shadings
52 Unmoving
53 The real __
54 Black tea
58 Work units
60 Work hard
61 Entreaty
62 Urban renewal target
65 Elected off.

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

A	D	E	L	E	■	L	I	M	E	■	A	S	E	A
G	A	M	I	N	■	O	L	A	V	■	T	O	M	B
E	M	I	T	S	■	R	I	T	A	■	R	U	B	Y
S	E	R	E	N	A	D	E	■	C	R	I	S	E	S
■	■	■	R	A	H	S	■	Q	U	A	S	A	R	S
S	H	E	A	R	S	■	Q	U	A	C	K	■	■	■
T	O	R	T	E	■	S	U	I	T	E	■	Z	A	P
A	N	N	E	■	S	P	I	C	E	■	C	O	L	A
G	E	E	■	S	L	I	N	K	■	L	I	N	E	N
■	■	■	C	H	A	N	T	■	F	I	N	E	S	T
S	C	A	L	E	N	E	■	I	R	O	N	■	■	■
T	H	R	E	A	D	■	E	M	A	N	A	T	E	D
A	I	D	E	■	E	L	L	A	■	E	M	I	L	E
I	C	E	S	■	R	O	A	M	■	S	O	L	E	S
D	O	N	E	■	S	U	N	S	■	S	N	E	A	K

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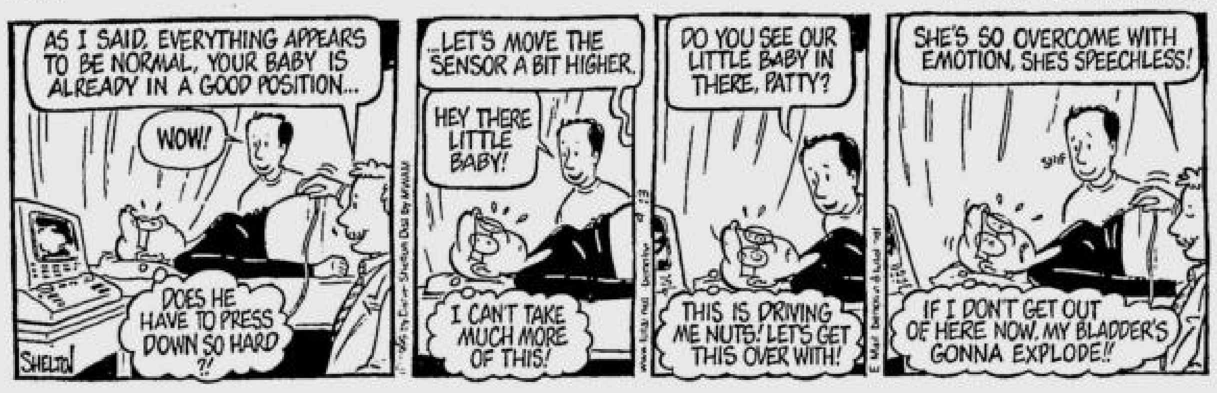
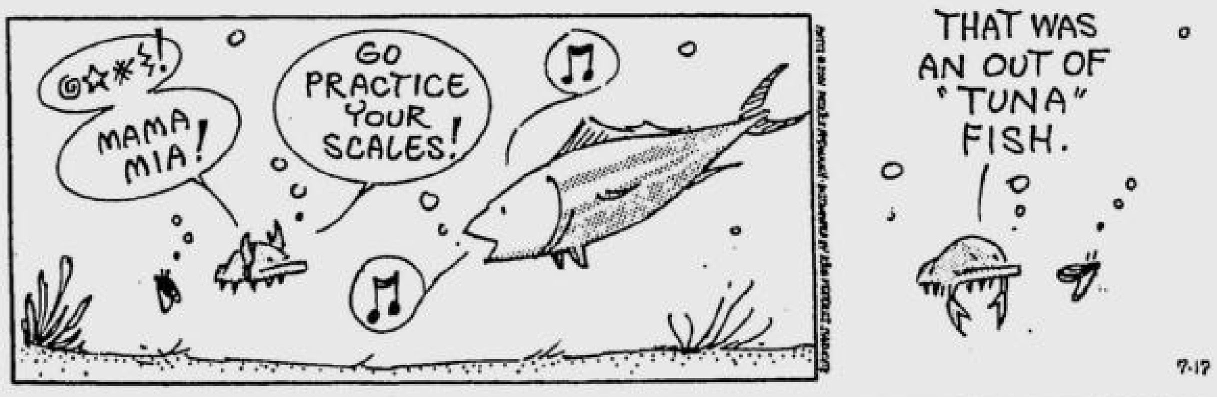
7/5/01

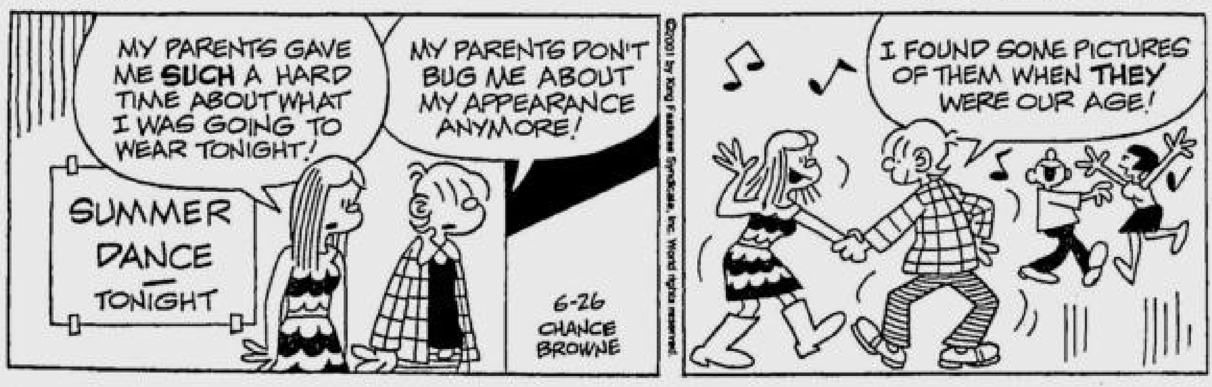
BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


AS I SAID, EVERYTHING APPEARS TO BE NORMAL, YOUR BABY IS ALREADY IN A GOOD POSITION...
WOW!
DOES HE HAVE TO PRESS DOWN SO HARD ?!
...LET'S MOVE THE SENSOR A BIT HIGHER.
HEY THERE LITTLE BABY!
I CAN'T TAKE MUCH MORE OF THIS!
DO YOU SEE OUR LITTLE BABY IN THERE, PATTY?
THIS IS DRIVING ME NUTS! LET'S GET THIS OVER WITH!
SHE'S SO OVERCOME WITH EMOTION, SHES SPEECHLESS!
SNIF
IF I DON'T GET OUT OF HERE NOW, MY BLADDER'S GONNA EXPLODE!!
SHELTON

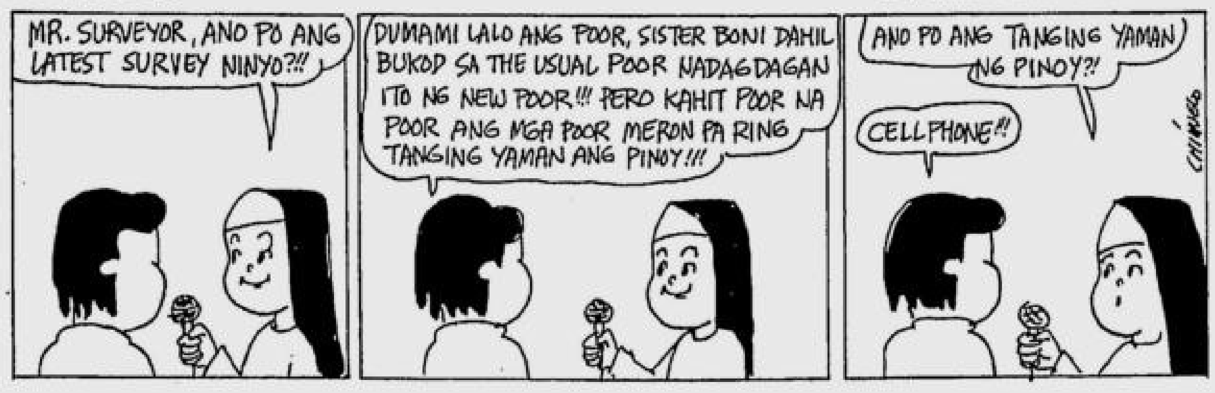
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


@☆✱$!
MAMA MIA!
GO PRACTICE YOUR SCALES!
THAT WAS AN OUT OF "TUNA" FISH.
7-17

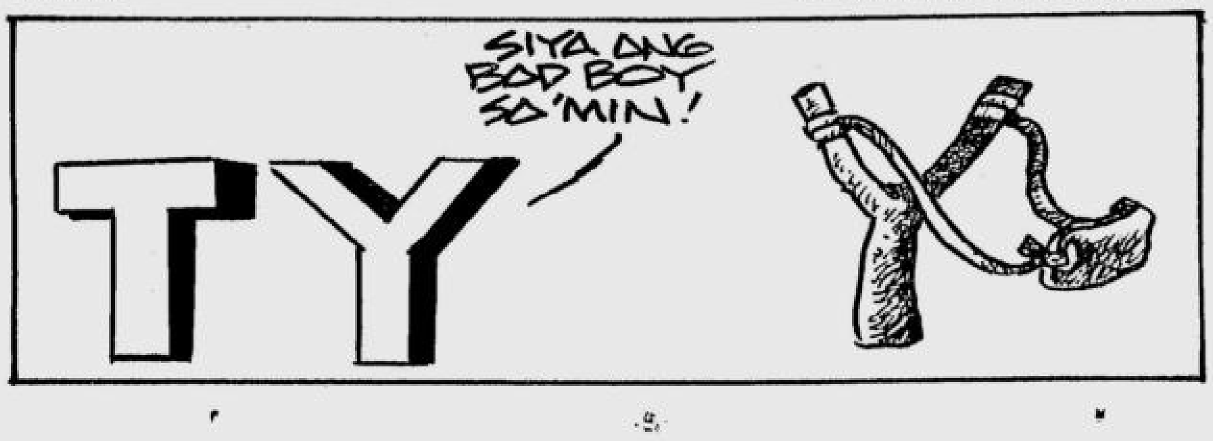
HI AND LOIS BY BRIAN & GREG WALKER


MY PARENTS GAVE ME SUCH A HARD TIME ABOUT WHAT I WAS GOING TO WEAR TONIGHT!
MY PARENTS DON'T BUG ME ABOUT MY APPEARANCE ANYMORE!
SUMMER DANCE TONIGHT
6-26
CHANCE BROWNE
I FOUND SOME PICTURES OF THEM WHEN THEY WERE OUR AGE!

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


MR. SURVEYOR, ANO PO ANG LATEST SURVEY NINYO?!!
DUMAMI LALO ANG POOR, SISTER BONI DAHIL BUKOD SA THE USUAL POOR NADAGDAGAN ITO NG NEW POOR!!! PERO KAHIT POOR NA POOR ANG MGA POOR MERON PA RING TANGING YAMAN ANG PINOY!!!
ANO PO ANG TANGING YAMAN NG PINOY?!
CELLPHONE!!

TULDOK BY PAPU & TATUM MILAMBILING


SIYA ANG BAD BOY SA'MIN!
TY

Health and fitness hub opens its doors to Ateneo community

(From page C1)

athletes, in mind. Two inaugurations and millions of pesos later, the Moro Lorenzo Sports Center, in cooperation with the Blue Eagle Foundation for Sports Development, is finally here. The recent opening of the Moro Health and Fitness gym (located at the basement level and operated independently by the Blue Eagle Foundation) showed that although there were mixed reactions about the gym's viability amid the current economic crisis, all were simply awed by its beauty.

Despite the fact that many Ateneo athletes already hold practice and training sessions at the Moro Lorenzo Sports Center, which includes a basketball court, volleyball/badminton area, gym, sports medicine clinic and an indoor track oval (the first in the country), it is only now that the Moro Health and Fitness gym has officially opened. Its Aug. 4 inauguration signaled the opening of its doors to the Ateneo community, as well as alumni-sponsored guests.

Dream gym

Being a regular at the sports center, I was eager to see what this latest addition to an already impressive facility had to offer. Moro Health and Fitness features a state-of-the-art gym using Life Fitness equipment, lockers, a sports medicine clinic and a "surround sound" aerobics facility.

According to sports center operations manager Chester Tiongson, the gym has six treadmills, four recumbent bikes, four upright bikes, four cross trainers (which simulate a cross-country skier's movements), two Concept II rowers and 20 stations for strength training. The aerobics facility, on the other hand, incorporates a "surround sound" audio system since, according to Tiongson, most aerobics facilities only have speakers located at the front. "*Para marinig din ng mga nasa likod ang* music," he says.

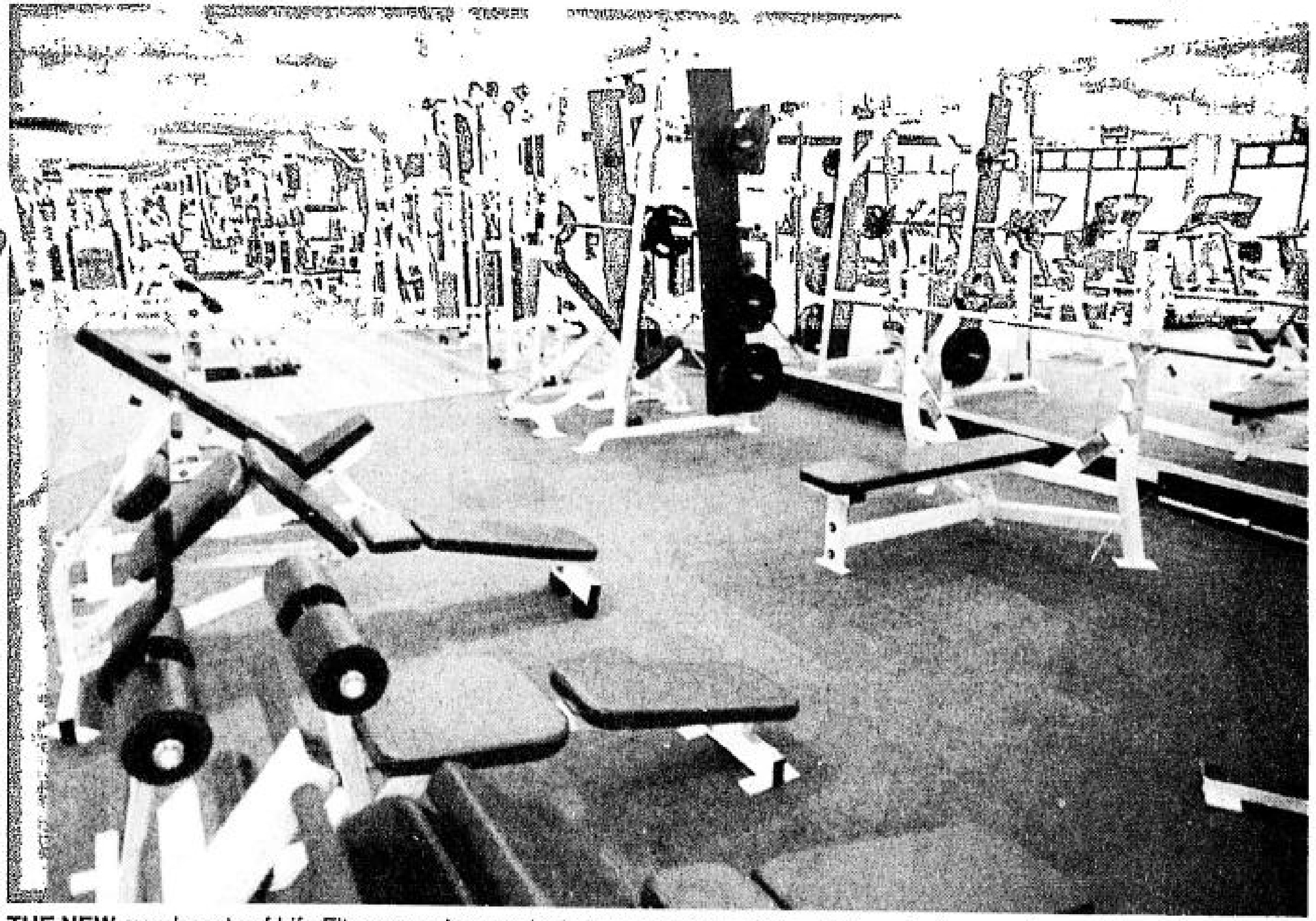
ADMU president Fr. Bienvenido Nebres tries one of the bikes.

ALICIA Lorenzo, wife of Ateneo's star athlete Moro Lorenzo after whom the gym is named.

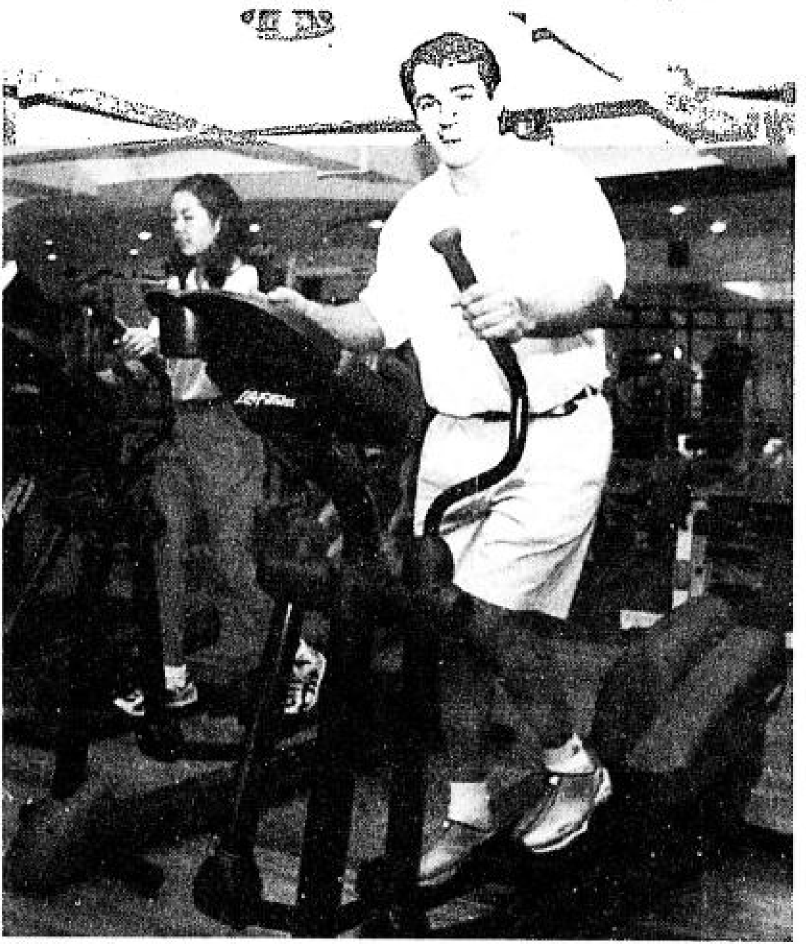
Students are given a special discount and pay only P950 a month for the use of Moro Health and Fitness. Alumni are charged P1,500, while alumni-sponsored guests have to shell out P1,900. Outsiders have to be sponsored by an Ateneo alumnus, since opening the gym to the public can pose many potential problems for management. "At least," Tiongson adds, "there is accountability when something goes wrong."

With a gym as high-tech as this, I got curious and asked one of the representatives of Life Fitness equipment just how much, say, a treadmill would cost. My jaw dropped to the floor when I realized that a treadmill costs as much as a good second-hand car. With a price tag that would make a dent even on a well-heeled Atenean's purse, many have since asked the inevitable question: Where did Ateneo get the money?

Blue Eagle Foundation for Sports Development board member Fr. Tito Caluag is quick to say that most of the money used for the gym actually came from the foundation, enabling the school to pay only a percentage of the actual cost. "Construction [of Moro Health and Fitness] was actually paid for by the foundation," he says. Caluag reiterates that Moro Health and Fitness will actually bring in about P10 million through its lease and operations, which will eventually go back to the school. "So Ateneo ends up getting all of the money back," he says.



THE NEW gym boasts of Life Fitness equipment, lockers, a sports medicine clinic and a "surround sound" aerobics facility.



VINCE Hizon

PHOTOS: ROGER CARPIO

Sports for others

The Moro Lorenzo Sports Center, however, is not just for the immediate Ateneo community. Plans are underway to make the center a platform for outreach programs, such as camps and training programs for provincial and public school athletes and coaches. Clinics and seminars could be held within the confines of the center, providing a much-needed venue for many cash-strapped teams and organizations. This is but one of the long-term plans of the Blue Eagle Foundation, that Caluag hopes will foster more goodwill in the community.

With a vision that seeks to make the Moro Lorenzo Sports Center a hub for health and fitness for the entire community, as well as provide a platform for outreach programs, the Ateneans' mantra of being men for others has found another channel; this time, through the positive influence of sports.

For more information on the Moro Health and Fitness, call Chester Tiongson at 426-6001 local 4690.

E-mail the author at johnaguilar@edsamail.com.ph

Doctors urge the overweight to take action now

ON THE 11TH European Congress on Obesity recently held at Vienna, Austria, doctors led by Alfred Wirth, Teutoburger Wald Clinic associate professor, urged the overweight to seek medical treatment. Obesity, classified by the World Health Organization as an epidemic, brings about numerous health problems such as type 2 diabetes; cardiovascular diseases like high cholesterol, high blood pressure, coronary heart disease and stroke; certain cancers; digestive diseases; respiratory disorders and joint diseases.

"Xenical is a major weapon for physicians globally in their battle to manage weight," says Wirth. A major study involving 5,000 physicians and 15,000 overweight men and women has confirmed without doubt that the weight-loss drug Xenical (Orlistat) can really support physicians by helping their patients in their battle to lose weight. The average weight loss with Xenical after seven months of treatment was approximately 11 percent of total body weight—around 11 kg (24 pounds) with participants losing around 8 centimeters (3 inches) from their waist measurement. The study also demonstrated significant improvements in health-related risks such as type 2 diabetes, cholesterol levels and blood pressure.

Xenical is the only available weight-loss medication that works locally in the gut to prevent dietary fat absorption by around 30 percent and effectively promotes weight loss and maintenance. It is the most extensively studied pharmacological weight management treatment to date, with over 30,000 overweight or obese patients participating in clinical trials. Unlike other weight loss medications, Xenical does not act on the brain. Since it was first marketed in 1998, there have been more than 9 million patient treatments worldwide. Xenical, a prescription drug, is locally available in all major drugstores.

Bigger population calls for revitalized programs

THE LATEST survey showed a significant increase in Philippine population, with the count overstepping the 75 million mark as of last year. Specifically, the report showed that the population growth rate now stands at an average 2.36 percent per year, higher than the expected rate of 2.1 to 2.2 percent.

In light of this new finding, representatives from various sectors of society have raised calls for renewed vigor in implementing the government's family planning and population control program. By doing so, they claim, the country secures one way to avert the likely negative impact such rapid growth will have on the economy's bid for sustainable development.

Echoing this call was Benny Llapitan, communications director of DKT Phils., an organization that has been an active partner of the government in its family planning program since 1990.

Llapitan said that the rising population rate might translate to greater difficulty in providing people with adequate basic needs and services such as food, housing, education and healthcare.

Based on the observed growth rate, demographers expect the Philippines' current population, pegged at 76.4 million, to double in only 29 years.

Experts have already began outlining the possible effects such an upsurge may have. Apart from the additional pressure to raise funds for social infrastructure, they also cited the need for government to create more job opportunities as well as enhance the existing pension fund system.

Through its social marketing program, DKT Phils. has provided invaluable assistance to the government in its drive to better educate people in the correct and safe methods of family planning.

It recently launched the Trust Family program that focuses on the rights of women to opt for a healthier lifestyle and manageable family through responsible parenting.

"The goal of the program is to promote health in the family and advocate that it is essential for both partners to have a shared responsibility in family matters that include a healthier and happier life," explained Llapitan.

Take Charge Doc!
Nicky S. Montoya, M.D.

MEDICard

Looking to learn more about your benefits under your MEDICard coverage? Do you want to be clear on the procedures, which allow you to avail of MEDICard's services? Get your information straight from MEDICard's Medical Director, DR. NICKY S. MONTOYA every Tuesday.

FAQs (frequently asked questions)

What is an Annual Physical Examination and is this included in my healthcare program with MEDICard?
Since its birth, MEDICard's thrust has always been on preventive healthcare. Annual Physical Exam, frequently called APE, is the cornerstone of this service. APE, done once a year is composed of a battery of medical and laboratory exams (X-ray, CBC, urinalysis, fecalysis, etc.) conducted to determine one's present health status and to detect diseases, especially in its early onset, where it is usually most reactive to treatment. APE is included in the standard healthcare program and members may avail of this service at MEDICard's Head Office Clinic in Makati City or at company premises of corporate clients through a MEDICard mobile medical team for a minimum of 50 principal members.

Meet your MEDICard Team

Dr. Hector Ramon B. Herradura is MEDICard's accredited Physiatrist in **FEU-Dr. Nicanor Reyes Medical Foundation Hospital** in West Fairview, Quezon City. Doc Monch is a Doctor of Medicine graduate also from FEU and later pursued specialization in Rehabilitation Medicine at the Philippine Orthopedic Center. Dr. Herradura is an active member of the Philippine Academy of Rehabilitation Medicine and has been practicing his profession for more than 3 years now. This doctor is a lover of basketball and billiards and takes time-out from his busy schedule to play the games with friends. Doc Hector is married to Dr. Maria Lourdes Ombac, a Pediatrician, and is blessed with a son, Hector Luis. You may visit Doc Hector for consultations at the FEU-NRMF every Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 4 to 6 PM.

One of MEDICard's most recently accredited service providers is **Dr. Rochelle K. Cauton-Valera**, "Doktora Valera", is based in Medical City General Hospital and specializes in Internal Medicine. She received her degree in Medicine from the University of the Philippines-PGH. She also subspecializes in Endocrinology. She is a member of the Philippine Medical Association and a Fellow to the Philippine College of Physicians. Doc Rochelle, is married to Dr. Eric Constantine Valera, an Ophthalmologist to whom she has one son. You may visit Dr. Valera at unit 2214 of the Medical Plaza every Mondays and Tuesdays from 12 noon to 5 PM, Wednesdays and Fridays from 10 AM to 5 PM and on Thursdays from 1 to 5 in the afternoon.

When you are in need of a good Pediatrician in St. Luke's, look for **Dr. Emelina De Jesus Velasco.** Dr. Velasco has been a MEDICard accredited physician for more than 4 years now. She earned her degree in Medicine from the University of Perpetual Help and her specialization from St. Luke's Medical Center. With over 5 years of practice in Pediatrics, you can be assured of the loving and caring service that she delivers to her patients. Doc Emelina is a fan of dancing and singing and spends most of her free time with her family. You may see her for consultations at room 137 of the Medical Arts Bldg. of St. Luke's Medical Center from Mondays to Saturdays, 3 to 6 PM.

We encourage all MEDICard members to voice out their concerns and issues at hand. BE HEARD AND BE READ. You can write DR. NICKY S. MONTOYA at 9/F Sagittarius Bldg. H.V. De la Costa St., Salcedo Village, Makati City or e-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com.

For individual or family membership inquiries, please call 818-2161 and look for Ms. Joy Mendiola. For group or corporate membership, please call 817-5136, 817-4985 or 817-5127 and look for a membership consultant.

TEXT MEDICard for your queries: 0917-7518365 (Globe) or 0919-2476240 (Smart). Please don't forget to include your complete name and landline number where MEDICard could reach you. *Log on to www.medicardphils.com*

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ISO 9002

Beware of instant gurus, psychics and other 'experts'

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

HAVE you noticed the sudden proliferation of instant gurus, feng shui experts, Reiki masters, past life readers and even instant hypnotists in our midst?

I am concerned about reports reaching me that there are fortune-tellers and all sorts of self-proclaimed psychics who are conducting past life regressions although they have no proper training for such a delicate process. These people are charging from P3,000 to P5,000 per sessions, so I've been told.

I must point out that hypnotic regression performed by untrained individuals can be dangerous, especially if the hypnotized subject goes into a highly traumatic past life memory. I know a case of several teenagers who hypnotized an 18-year-old cousin to a lifetime 150 years back by following a hypnosis book. The girl went into hysterics and was unable to come back to the present. Fortunately, one of them found my name in the telephone directory and I was able to help them get the girl out of trance.

There are also instant Reiki masters who, after attending a one-week seminar, began to teach Reiki. A French Reiki master I know who has observed this unusual practice in the Philippines told me, "It took me several years to become a Reiki master. Here it takes only one week."

Then there are the instant feng shui experts who start advising unsuspecting clients how to rearrange their doors, furniture and appliances to have better "chi." They have very little or no training at all from reputable institutions. One of these false feng shui experts even had the nerve to tell me that "feng shui is only a matter of common sense."

One of these experts charged an unsuspecting businessman P250,000 several years ago to fix the bad feng shui of a beach resort in Southern Manila which was plagued by malevolent spirits. He did his job and was paid the money he charged; however, the place is still haunted up to now. Good feng shui does not drive away evil spirits. You need an exorcist to do that. The resort is closed up to now.

There are people who attend a seminar or two (some even under me) and immediately afterward establish a center purporting to teach meditation, past lives and similar topics about which they are not deeply knowledgeable. They also conduct healing of one type or another. It would be unwise to undergo training from such individuals who have no proper qualification or credentials to teach. They are mere opportunists, but because there are no regulatory agencies or professional organizations watching over them, any enterprising individual can simply put up a sign or call himself a "master," and start giving seminars or rendering paranormal services to unsuspecting individuals.

There was a former student of mine who called me recently asking if a certain psychic is real or reliable. I didn't know that psychic and when I asked why, the caller said, "She volunteered to exorcise our clubhouse of bad spirits for P25,000." He wanted to know if that amount was reasonable.

I was shocked! Is this the going rate nowadays for simple exorcism? One group does this even for free. And if they do charge, it is never for that enormous amount.

Another group of self-proclaimed psychics, which is led by a woman, was charging a group of scared nuns north of Manila over P250,000 to get rid of violent elves and other elementals molesting them and interfering with their religious activities. I referred them to one reliable group of well-trained psychics, clairvoyants and exorcists, who only asked for donation, and the problem was solved. The grateful head of the convent gifted each of them with a carton of Fuji apples.

Because of the activation of evil spirits during the turn of the millennium, there are now more and more cases of spirit interference and molestation being reported in media. And because very few people are really trained to handle such cases, many have begun to take advantage of the situation.

My advice to people who may need such services is this: Ask the so-called expert, guru, psychic, feng shui expert, Reiki master, or exorcist what his or her qualifications are and what institutions he or she has studied in before you hire or give money to him or her. If the person can't show any reliable credentials that will qualify him or her to perform the task for which he or she is being hired, drop this false expert like the proverbial hot potato.

> If one can't show any reliable credentials that will qualify him to perform the task for which he's hired, drop this false expert like a hot potato

Address letters to this column to 308 Prince Plaza I, 106 Legaspi St., Greenbelt, Makati City or e-mail jlicauco@geocities.com. Visit www.angelfire.com/journal/licauco. Listen to my dzMM radio program every Sunday, 6-8 p.m.

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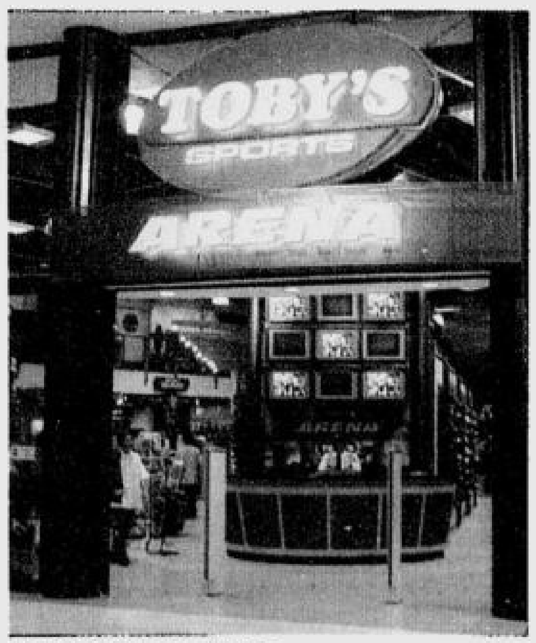

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